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May-June 1976

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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May-June 1976

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor
Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

The illustration on our cover this issue is a reproduction of the cover of the Sells-Floto Circus program for the season of 1917. The drawings are in full color with the title in orange outlined in black. The outside border is bright red. The actual performance listing is printed on green news print and is bound in the center of the magazine.

The original is from the Pfening Collection.

THE CHS CONVENTION

The Circus Historical Society will hold its next convention in Sarasota, Florida, in February 1977.

The organization will return to a more typical convention mode with social events combined with historical circus presentations. The Circus Hall of Fame, The Ringling Museum of the Circus and the Venice winter quarters will be features of the meeting.

The Sarasota area is very popular as a visiting place for circus fans at this time of the year and it is expected that this will be one of the most outstanding meetings in CHS history.

No summer meeting will be held in 1976.

NEW MEMBER RESPONSE

Following comments in the last issue of the BANDWAGON great interest has come forward towards increasing the membership in the Circus Historical Society.

Many members have added a few dollars to their dues payment and others have requested applications for their friends. This positive action is moving our organization into a much stronger financial position and should assure continued publication of the same quality magazine as we have enjoyed in the past.

Our goal is a net increase of 200 members making a total of 1500. As of this date we are yet to receive dues and subscription payments from around 200. If your payment is not received by July 15 you will be dropped from the BANDWAGON mailing list.

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Slatersville, Rhode Island 02876

Edward B. Smith, Jr. 1164
P.O. Box 611
Orange, Calif. 92666

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1967 Jan.-Feb., July-Aug.,
Nov.-Dec.
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1971 all issues but May-June
1972 all issues available
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1976 all issues to date

The price is \$1.50 each.
Please add 50¢ postage.

BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES
2515 Dorset Rd.
Columbus, Ohio 43221

WANTED

Listing of all circus (music)
records available for sale,
preferably by Merle Evan Circus
Band.

Robert G. Robinson
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Digby, N.S., Canada B0U1A0

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Receipts & Disbursements for period May 1, 1975 thru April 30, 1976

| | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Bank Balance May 1, 1975 | | 822.18 |
| RECEIPTS: | | |
| Members Dues (Received in April 1975) | 5984.00 | |
| Members Dues (Received after May 1, 1975) | 3433.30 | |
| Subscription Payments | 1418.00 | |
| New Subscriptions | 153.00 | |
| New Members | 343.50 | |
| Back Issue Sale | 959.13 | |
| Advertising | 1233.00 | |
| | 13,523.93 | 14,346.11 |
| (Total bank deposits in fiscal year \$13,523.93) | | |
| DISBURSEMENTS: | | |
| Bandwagon Printing (7 issues) | 10818.79 | |
| Sec'y Expense | 453.77 | |
| Sec'y Postage | 413.68 | |
| Bandwagon Postage | 505.00 | |
| Addressing Bandwagons | 615.80 | |
| Election Expense | 201.83 | |
| Membership Card Printing | 54.81 | |
| Bandwagon Envelope Printing | 423.26 | |
| Dues Envelope Printing (2 years) | 201.83 | |
| Refunds | 32.00 | |
| Bank Charges | 6.34 | |
| Returned Bad Checks | 38.00 | |
| | 13,751.28 | |
| Bank Balance as per bank statement April 30, 1976 | | \$594.83 |

Unaudited, prepared by
Fred D. Pfening, Jr. May 24, 1976

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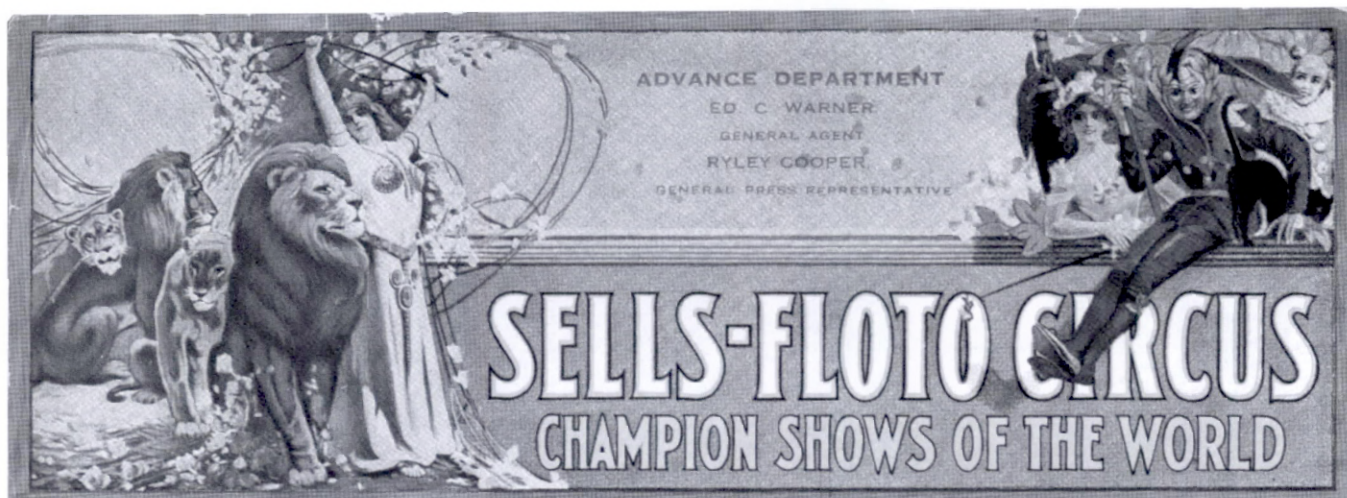
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THE SEASONS OF 1916-1918

By Gordon M. Carver

SEASON OF 1916

Buffalo Bill was never happy on the Sells-Floto Circus. His feeling was that of a slave for his master. He had always felt that Tammen had taken unfair advantage of him by loaning him money on disadvantageous terms and then foreclosing at the earliest opportunity. He was no longer the owner, just a hired hand, albeit it a well-paid one and much applauded, but he missed the independence. So it was not surprising that he continued his efforts to again have his own show.

After the first announcement in mid 1915 that he was planning to do this, it was confirmed in December that he was to have his own show with many

novel features traveling on 23 cars with two of those in advance. It was also indicated that the show was expected to open in Madison Square Garden, New York City.

This was denied by Tammen who said that Buffalo Bill had signed with Sells-Floto for 1916, that much advertising paper featuring him had been ordered and that if he attempted to perform elsewhere he would be legally enjoined. Buffalo Bill countered with the statement that Tammen had no legal hold on him, that "I notified Mr. Tammen in writing that I would not be with him during the coming season" first in July and again on November 15. After much such bickering Tammen finally released Buffalo Bill from his

This letterhead was designed for the 1916 season. Since it was used by the press department a paragraph appeared listing the features, Jess Willard and Frank Gotch, as well as Ross DeVoro, champion cowboy, Rosa Roseland, Rhoda Royal and Lucia Zora. The letterhead is printed in full color with the title in white outlined in black.

contract and it was announced that he would not have his own show but would be with the 101 Ranch Wild West Show. It was to be his last year in show business for he died in January 1917 after a short illness. But that takes us ahead of our story.

As to Sells-Floto the loss of Buffalo Bill did not seem to make any significant difference in their plan for 1916. They were to travel on 42 cars — two advance cars, twelve stocks, eighteen flats and ten coaches — virtually the same consist as in 1915, two less flats and one more stock car. Also they were again to use the six pole big top, a 160 foot round with five fifty foot middles with the performance given in three rings and two stages.

The first announcement about the 1916 show was that Frank Gotch, wrestler, and Jess Willard, World Champion prize fighter, had been hired to take on all comers in the after show. Gotch was also to do an act entitled "Physical Phenomena". No further description was ever given as to what this was so we can only assume that it was probably some demonstration of physical strength, weightlifting or the like. Jess Willard was also to appear in the Spec. They were to have their own private railroad car and they were each reported to receive



The red ticket wagon is pictured on the Sells-Floto lot during the 1916 season. McClintock Collection.

a salary of \$1,200 per day. But this figure (a total of \$2,400 per day) for the two shows plus the cost of the wild west contingent, which also was in the concert, is obviously impossible and we must assume it more likely that the salary was \$1,200 per week, which in those days was a very handsome sum.

The show opened in Wichita, Kans., on Saturday, April 29 and immediately started moving eastward in an attempt to beat the big shows into the mid-west. They opened the first week May 1-2 in Kansas City, Mo., followed by Kansas City, Kans., St. Joseph, Mo., Council Bluffs, Ia., and Lincoln, Neb. The second week they were in Omaha, Sioux City, Ia., Carroll, Ft. Dodge, Waterloo and Marshalltown. The third week opened in Des Moines and then came Boone, Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Rock Island, Ill., and Burlington, Ia. The fourth week found them moving east through Peoria, Ill., Springfield, Decatur, Lafayette, Ind., Logansport and Muncie.

By now "Little Miracle", the third baby sired by Snyder and born to Alice at winterquarters on April 15 was six weeks old and to all appearances was doing well. Evidently a new formula for the baby was working and Little Miracle seemed to be healthy. Again much was being made of it as a feature in the advertising. Lithos had been ordered and were used for the entire season for unlike her two prior siblings she survived the rest of the route.

The program given in three rings and on two stages actually was not much different than that of 1915, just spread over a little more space. It follows:

- 1 — Spec — America
- 2 — Lucia Zora and her lions and tigers
- 3 — Mary Enos — globe rolling
Two Chesters — hand balancing
Two Degroffs — gymnasts
Ida Miaco — contortionist
- 4 — DeGarros — double ladders
The Hastings — double ladders
Irene Montgomery — single ladder
Phil Darling — single ladder
- 5 — Jack Harris with twenty clowns in walkarounds
- 6 — Arlene Palmer — Kas and Mo, baby elephants
Carrie Royal — Muggins and Billy Sunday, elephants, and dogs and monkeys
Lucia Zora — elephants
- 7 — Comedy elephant and giraffe on the track — Terwilliger, Marshall and clowns
- 8 — Virginia LaMar, Lola Marvin, Emma Gray — statue horses
- 9 — Clown animal hunt
- 10 — Les Hamilton — trained hyneys
Carrie Royal — dogs, ponies and monkeys
Don Darragh — dogs and ponies
On the track — Jack Harris and



The mounted cowboy band is shown in a parade on the Floto show during the 1916 season. Pfening Collection.

- John Albion with the mule Snowball
- 11 — Wright and Bayfield — revolving tables
Donnelly and Hall — revolving tables
Kelley & the Tumbling Toms — revolving tables
- 12 — Esther Hobson — principal riding
Rosa Rosalind — horse to horse backward somersaults
Irene Montgomery — principal riding
- 13 — Clowns on the track
- 14 — Jack Harris and the unrideable mule
- 15 — High School Riders on 13 horses
- 16 — Three Luckey Sisters — iron jaw
Enos Frazier — heel and toe catches
Darling Sisters — aerial ladders
The Chesters — revolving aerial ladders
DeGarros Sisters — single trapeze
- 17 — High stilt clown burlesque
- 18 — Aldene Potter, Irene Montgomery and six Sioux Indians
The Darrahs and six Sioux Indians
Homer and Estelle Hobson and six Sioux Indians
- 19 — Concert announcement — Jess Willard, Frank Gotch and wild west with Weaver Gray making his 8 horse catch and the stage coach attach
- 20 — DeGroffs — slack wire
Dracula — aerial frog, contortion
Gene and Mary Enos — high perch
Five DeGarros — flying rings
Fred Riggs — slack wire
Three Luckey Sisters — slack wire
- 21 — H.C., Devlin and his troupe of Zouaves in military maneuvers and wall scaling
- 22 — Clowns — burlesque of the Zouaves led by Frank Harris
- 23 — Aerial bars — Delnos Troupe
Aerial bars — Delnos Troupe
- 24 — Races

Again the clowns played a big role in the performance. There were seven

listed numbers in the program as well as other unlisted individual bits. All told there were some thirteen production skits. The staff was up slightly from 1915. Twenty names were listed in clown alley including Harry Bayfield, producer, Bill Albion, Jack Harris, Ward Wright and the DeMars, all of whom had been on the show the previous year.

As usual there were two side shows on the midway. They were both of the pit show style and run by two brothers, Max and Fred Klass. The No. 1 show had two midget Aztecs; Lalla Coolah, half-man half woman; an armless wonder; mentalist; a living skeleton; George Smith, glass blower; and the Berry family of sword swallowers. This show was run by Max. The No. 2 show, run by Fred, had the Great Nemo, escape artist; Dick Hyland, man fish; trained birds; Snakizer, wild girl with snakes; the Lady With A Thousand Eyes; and a monkey mother and baby. This last exhibit seemed to be a popular one on many side shows. As had been pretty regularly true, these were mostly novelty rather than freak shows and did seem to have a good drawing power.

The show moving rapidly eastward opened the fifth week on May 29 at Indianapolis followed by Terre Haute, Vincennes, Princeton and Evansville, all Indiana, and closing in Owensboro, Ky. The next week started in Louisville, then came Lexington, Newport, Norwood, O., Richmond, Ind. and Dayton, O. The seventh week was all in Ohio at Springfield, Washington, C.H., Lancaster, Coshocton, Canton, and Nw Philadelphia. At Canton the first section did not arrive until 9 a.m. after which they had a three mile haul, unusually long for a town of this size, which meant that the parade did not get off the lot until 1:30. But in spite of this they had big crowds at both shows. At New Philadelphia the new Knox truck which had been received at Dayton "caused great excitement" by pulling six cages and a cannon. The cannon, incidentally, was a small field artillery piece that was used by the



Lucia Zora, best known presenting elephant acts also worked a lion and tiger act during the 1916 season. Eddie Jackson Collection.

Zouaves in their drills and also in the parade.

During this period Buffalo Bill received some satisfaction in connection with the original closing of the Buffalo Bill Wild West-Pawnee Bill Far East Shows in Denver in 1913. The Federal Title & Trust Co., of Denver, legal representatives of the foreclosure, ordered Tammen and Bonfils to pay them \$42,388. This represented the value of the show equipment that the Sells-Floto Show gained in excess of the debts owed them by the "Two Bills" show. It is believed that most of this money went to the owners of the "Two Bills" show.

The eighth week got off to a bad start, although since it was on a Sunday no harm was done. In a relatively short run into Wheeling, W.Va., from New Philadelphia, because of a train wreck the second section of the show did not arrive until 10 p.m. The next stand, Tuesday, June 20, at Marietta, O., was lost due to heavy rains and a bad lot. The rest of the week was uneventful at Clarksburg, W.Va., Grafton, Cumberland, Md., and Martinsburg, W.Va. The ninth week starting June 25 saw them reach Pennsylvania. The route was Hagerstown, Md., Frederick, York, Pa., where they shared the lot with the Harry Lukens Show, a carnival, Lancaster, Phoenixville and Shenandoah. Here the show arrived six hours late, cancelled the parade and sustained damage to Jess Willard's car from a small fire.

Again the season had opened with much fanfare about the coming eastern tour. It was announced that the show would get all the way to Maine. But this was another false alarm for the fact is that Lancaster, Pa., was the farthest

east the show got. From there it began to work westward again starting the tenth week July 3 in Shamokin followed by Williamsport, Brookville, Franklin, Sharon and ending in Warren, O. An interesting sidelight on the use of caterpillar tractors on circus lots is that Harry Tammen announced during this week that he had ordered one and planned to order another. However, for what reasons we do not know, neither were ever delivered and so far as we know no "cat" was used on a circus lot until Ringling introduced them in 1939. There is no question that Tammen was a farsighted and progressive circus owner and manager far ahead of his time.

Now began a quick trip across the country to get into the far west. In four weeks they arrived in Denver. In those four weeks they went through Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska. At Fort Wayne, July 13, they ran up against a most unusual city ordinance. It specified that no "wild animals" be exhibited in the parade. Thus all the cages were kept closed and the camels and elephants remained on the lot. South Chicago was played Sunday July 16, the first of three Sunday stands during the season, followed by Aurora, Ill., where Frank Gotch broke his ankle in the aftershow which put him out for the rest of the season. He was replaced July 22 at Wassau, Wis., by Yusiff Husanne. Here also, although they put up extra seats, they had people on the ground.

They opened August at Nebraska City, Neb., where they had to cancel the night show because of rain. But the next day at Beatrice attendance records were broken at both shows with extra seats and people on the ground. Thursday August 3 coming into Grand Island they had a long run with a consequent late arrival with the parade not leaving the lot until 1 p.m.



Rosa Roseland and her somersault from horse to horse was a feature of the Sells-Floto performance in 1916. Burt Wilson Collection.

In spite of this they had good attendance at both shows. Finally on Monday August 7 they played in Denver to two turnaways with a total take of \$11,000. It is evident that the advance with F.C. Mann, still after several years, in charge of the number one advance car with 21 men, George Roddy on the number two car with 23 men, Al Butler handling press contracts and Courtney Riley Cooper doing the advance stories were really doing their jobs in this part of the country in getting people to the ticket wagon.

For the rest of August and September they played their usual route of stands through Colorado, Montana, Utah, Oregon and Washington. They were in Great Falls, Mont., August 17, Salt Lake City 25, Ogden 27-28, Spokane September 11, Seattle 15-16, Tacoma 18, and Portland 21-22. They entered California at Weed Friday, September 29. It was announced that the show would share California with Barnum & Bailey and that there would be no direct competition.

The staff that started the season was so far as we know still with the show although for several it would be their last with it. Those who would end their connection were Fred Hutchinson, General Manager; Bill Curtis, Supt. of Canvas; and Karl King, Musical Director who had 25 musicians including the steam and air calliope players. Others who had been with it for some years and would continue next year were the Trainmaster, George Brown; Boss Hostler, George Stumpf; Steward, Tod Frye; Ring Stock Boss, Nobby Clark; Supt. of Lights, W.B. Embleton; Supt. of Props, Charles Luckey and Fred Alispaw in charge of 14 elephants.

After Weed they quickly moved

down the coast being in Sacramento Monday, October 2, Oakland 5, San Francisco 6-8, the third Sunday show, and Los Angeles 16-18. On Monday 23, they entered Arizona at Phoenix. This was perhaps the shortest tour of California that they had had up to then. After Phoenix there was a week of stands in Arizona and then they entered Texas at El Paso 30. November 2 they were billed for San Antonio but when they arrived they found the lot too small and had to cancel the date. About a week of small towns followed until they closed the season Monday 13 at Fort Worth.

Just before the season ended it was learned that Tammen's health which had not been good for the last few years had worsened. The outcome of this was that Sells-Floto Circus was offered for sale in the December 4 *The Billboard* — all cars, wagons, tents, seats, animals, etc., enough to make a 42 car circus. The sale was to be held Friday, December 15 at Overland Park, Denver, terms cash. However, for reasons not now known but about which we can only speculate the sale was never held and Sells-Floto continued to operate under ownership of Tammen and Bonfils for another four years before it was sold to the American Circus Corporation at the end of the 1920 season.

SEASON OF 1917

As the new year of 1917 came in Buffalo Bill lay seriously ill in Denver. And on Wednesday, January 10, he passed "over the great divide". So where his show career had come to an end so did his life. While he had no love for Denver, his body lay in state in the Capitol Building for four hours on the day of his funeral and an estimated 75,000 people watched his funeral cortege.

While all this was happening, H.H. Tammen who had helped Buffalo Bill to his downfall in show business was also seriously ill. It was therefore, no surprise to learn that he was "out of the circus game because his doctors have compelled him to." In his announcement it was a surprise to learn that H.B. Gentry was to run Sells-Floto "taking orders from no one" including Tammen. While nothing specific was said then or later there were indications that Gentry was more than just an employee — that in some way he had a financial interest in the show. In any event having him, an experienced and highly successful circus manager in charge of the show with apparently a free hand was a wise move on Tammen's part. With Gentry in the driver's seat the parade, performance and route were all strengthened and it now became acknowledged that Sells-Floto was second only to Barnum & Bailey and Ringling Bros. shows.

There is no question that Gentry was the difference for, except for only a couple of changes, the staff was virtually the same as it had been the previous year. Ed Warner was still the General Agent and R.R. Contractor while Frank Braden, Al Butler and Beverly White handled the advance press chores. Fred Mann and George Roddy again had the two advance cars. Doc Palmer had the side show and Rhoda Royal was still the Equestrian Director while C.L. Brown was Bandmaster.

Other bosses still handling their chores were George Stumpf, draft stock; Nobby Clark, ring stock; G.W. Ebleton, lights; Charles Luckey, props; Ted Frye, cookhouse; and Fred Alispaw, elephants and menagerie. The one big change was the move of Capt. Bill Curtis to the Hagenbeck-Wallace show and his replacement by John Eberle.

Jim Williams was the trainmaster responsible for the 40 cars back. Some but not all of the old 60 foot wooden flats had now been replaced by 72 foot steel flats made by the Venice Transportation Co. They were reinforced with steel truss rods and while they could carry a larger load they did not have the strength of the Mt. Vernon

Jess Willard and Frank Gotch were featured in the newspaper ads during the 1916 season. Pfening Collection.

PASADENA OCT. 13 AFTERNOON
FRIDAY and EVENING

SEATS ON SALE SHOW DAY SUN DRUG STORE

BUFFALO BILL
ORIGINAL WILD WEST
AND
PRAIRIE OUTFIT OF
INDIANS, RANCH GIRLS
COWBOYS AND
RANGERS

ZORA BRAVEST
WOMAN IN THE
WORLD
3
HEROES
WRESTLING
ELEPHANTS

THE TWO
WORLD'S
CHAMPIONS
JESS
WILLARD
and
FRANK
GOTCH
WILL APPEAR AT EVERY
PERFORMANCE

WILD WEST

120
WORLD'S
CHAMPION
RIDERS
DARING
FASCINATING
SEE THE
HYPERLY LIVING

10 CLOWNS, COURT JESTERS
AGNES ZARKE

BIG GALA PARADE TWO MILES LONG
10:30 A. M. 1916

cars that came on the scene in 1920 or the later Warren cars.

For the second year in a row the show opened in Wichita, Kans. this year on Saturday, April 28, and as in 1916 moved east from there. But for the first time in its sixteen years it would not play the west coast. The furthest west it would get was Colorado where it spent only one week. Most of the spring and summer it played in and around the midwest, but again getting into Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Then late in the summer it would move into new territory, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee. It also played more of the big cities.

After the opener for the first week it moved to Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Coffeyville, Kans., Pittsburg, Joplin, Mo., and Parsons, Kans. Starting May 7 they were in Hannibal, Mo., Quincy, Ill., Springfield, Danville, Champaign and Crawfordsville, Ind. The third week took them to Indianapolis, Richmond, Dayton, O., Columbus, Newark and Cambridge. In both Dayton and Columbus there was opposition from Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson and Barnum & Bailey. To combat these shows they used many large newspaper ads.

The opening in Wichita was a great success. The show had arrived several days ahead of the opening date and had had five days of rehearsals. Also the city Fathers had voted to suspend the \$150 daily license fee and a group of business men arranged to pay the \$100 lot rental. So the show was off to a good start.

The Billboard gave the show a featured headlined rave review, the best it had ever given Sells-Floto, giving all the credit to H.B. Gentry. It said it was "a wholesome, beautiful, shimmering thing *** with a parade nearly twice as long" as in prior years. It went on, "Sells-Floto can be today classed as the beginning of a new era in show business *** H.B. Gentry has been dreaming of just such a show as Sells-Floto for forty years." Never once was Tammen's name mentioned. It must have been something of an affront to him.

The program given in three rings and two stages was as follows:

- 1 — Opening spec
- 2 — Ida Delno, contortionist; Mellnott, unsupported ladders; Kamba, Japs; Melnott, the second unsupported ladders; Lou Hersy, contortionist; Clara Melnott; Frieda Biggs, contortionist; Ken Palmer, contortionist.
- 3 — Elephants handled by Aldine Palmer, Lucia Zora, and Carrie Royal
- 4 — Clowns — Horace Webb, Freddie Biggs, Frank Stout, Harry Bayfield, Jerry Anton, Lou Hershey, Arthur LaRue, Harvey Johnson, Frank LeRoy, R.D. King, Ken Palmer, Ward Wright, Art

Monette, Rex Bonne, Wm. Delavoye, Charles Dearth, Dick Evans, Toto the Frog, Jack Harris, R.J. Terwilliger, Alva Bryant, Dewey Campbell (22)

- 5—Horses in statuary posing by the Misses Paris Williams, Ella Webb and Ella Dobbs
- 6—Clowns
- 7—Dogs and ponies presented by Carrie Queen, Les Hamilton, Don Darragh, Jack Harris and Aldine Potter.
- 8—Equestrienne acts by Stella Hobson, Daisy Hodgini, and Irene Montgomery
- 9—Bucking mules
- 10—Extra Attraction—Herberta (Beeson), king and queen combined, up on the high wire
- 11—The Luckeys, wire act; Ella Webb Troupe, double trapeze; Loretta Twins, trampoline bar act; Melnott-LaNole, tight wire; Frieda Biggs, slack wire; Mlle. Irene, swinging ladder; Ella Webb, single trapeze; Charlene Reiger, swinging ladder.
- 12—Rhoda Royal Troupe of high school horses
- 13—Luckey Troupe, aerial strong jaw artists; Nevikoff Troupe, aerialists; Elnor Sisters, aerial strong jaw artists.
- 14—Indian Riding Acts—Baraboo George, Usarda Troupe and Indian riders under the leadership of Homer Hobson
- 15—Acrobats—Bonmoor Arabs; Tun Chin Troupe; Dollfran Arabs; Leon Fung, slide for life
- 16—Two Troupes of the Delnos in aerial bar acts
- 17—Races

Aside from Rhoda Royal and his horses perhaps the most outstanding feature in the program was Herberta (Herbert Beeson) advertised as the "Eltinge of the wire". Eltinge was a famous fashion plate vaudeville artist of the era well known for his style. Beeson, who always performed in female costume, thus making his skill seem more impressive, later became a center ring attraction on the Ringling-Barnum show. As to the rest of the show it made up in quantity what it may have lacked in quality. About half of the numbers in the performance used the three rings and two stages or the air above. But whatever its weaknesses may have been it did impress *The Billboard* reviewer as we have seen.

The fourth week opened May 21, in Wheeling, W.Va., followed by Wells-ville, New Philadelphia, Masillon, Akron and Lorain, all in Ohio. The fifth week found the show still in Ohio at Sandusky, Fremont, and Toledo and then in Michigan at Flint, Saginaw and Bay City. Now in June the show turned west again moving through Indiana and Illinois at South Bend 6, Gary 7,

Waukegan 16, and Elgin 16. The eighth week started at Milwaukee where the best business of the season to that point was had by the show, a sellout in the afternoon and a turnaway at night. The week ended at Madison. The ninth week found them at St. Paul on Tuesday and Minneapolis the next two days.

Then came a quick eight day trip across Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska to start the eleventh week, July 9-10 at Denver followed by Boulder, Colorado Springs, Pueblo and Trinidad. At Trinidad they showed to about 9,000 people and got very favorable comments in the local press. It was said that "they established a record for cleanliness, decency and freedom from graft. No arrests were made. The ushers were a gentlemanly set of young fellows who were quite a change from the usual run of strong arm bullies". Up to that time business had been better through the midwest than was usually expected at this time of the year.

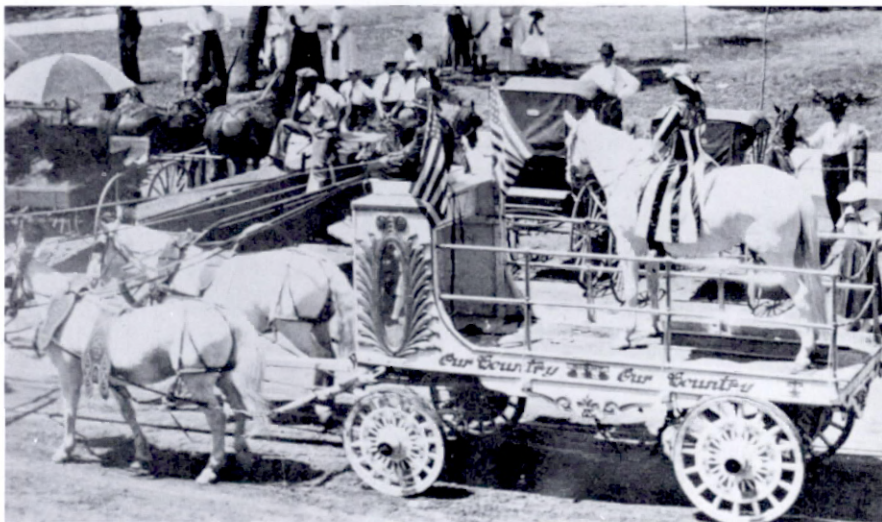
Ater Colorado the show quickly headed east again playing mostly the smaller towns for the next three weeks in Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. On August 8 they arrived in Illinois at Granite City followed by Belleville and then moved into Kentucky at Paducah. This first week in August was reported to have brought big business. But the draft, the U.S. was now in WWI, was beginning to take its toll of men on the show — almost daily men were leaving for the armed services — and for the rest of the war manpower was to be a real problem for the circus business. Ater a week in Kentucky and Indiana they arrived in Ohio, Monday, August 20 at Hamilton followed by Washington C.H., Chillicothe, Portsmouth and ended the

The "Our Country" float appeared in the 1917 parade. MaBelle Chipman, mother of Harry Chipman, is on the horse. Bill Woodcock Collection.

week in West Virginia at Huntington and Charleston.

The eighteenth week opened with a two day stand, August 27-28, at Pittsburgh. Then came Fairmont, W.Va., Uniontown, Pa., Connellsville and McKeesport. At the last three of these towns either rain or muddy lots were encountered with poor business. On Sunday, September 2 at East Liberty, the large stove wagon broke through a large underground sewer pipe just a few feet from the cook tent and had to stay there to cook breakfast before it could be extricated. However, East Liberty brought a turn around from the end of the previous week and business was excellent. But in Allegheny, Tuesday, after a two mile haul from the runs to the lot business was only fair. Then on Wednesday at Sharon the first section was in early but the second section did not arrive until noon, and the afternoon show was cancelled and the parade given at 4 p.m. Late arrivals began to plague all the shows about now because of heavy use of the railroads for the movement of troops and war material and was to continue through the end of the war in 1918. And this was particularly true in the eastern part of the country.

After a few stops in Ohio and Indiana the show turned south. They started the twenty-first week in Columbia, Tenn. followed by Huntsville, Ala., September 18. Originally the 18th had been scheduled for Fayetteville, Tenn., but because of the above mentioned heavy wartime railroad traffic, had to be cancelled on the Saturday prior to the Tuesday date. Ater telegraphic work by the advance, Huntsville was substituted. The local papers were held Saturday night and large advertisements gotten into the Sunday editions. The bill cars arrived Monday and got paper up just one day in advance. Considering the short advance the show reported that it did nice business. The next day at Chattanooga,





The sidewall of the menagerie was raised to allow the cages to be taken inside. A 1917 photo. Pfening Collection.



Here is another cage being moved into the menagerie during the 1917 season. Pfening Collection.

SEASON OF 1918

after a late arrival and another two mile haul to the lot, there was a late parade but good attendance at both shows.

They entered Georgia September 20 at Dalton followed by Cartersville and Marietta, all of which gave excellent business as did the next date, a Monday and Tuesday stand in Atlanta. The next date at Covington was most unusual but was a tribute to the management's ingenuity. The lot only a block from the town square was big enough for only the big top. The midway was in the street and the cages were lined up in the street as a free attraction. Two big audiences appreciated the show. The week ended at Athens, Thompson and Augusta where rain and mud held down attendance. At Augusta the evening show was lost because of heavy rains which left water a foot deep in the big top. Loading of the show was not completed until 2 p.m. the next day, Sunday.

The show continued to play throughout Georgia for another two and a half weeks, mostly in smaller towns. (Here was a big circus that could seat 8-9,000 in its six pole big top playing towns that about 60 years later are able to barely support the truck shows whose big tops will seat only a quarter that many people.) Business in this territory was generally quite good when the weather was good.

On October 19 they moved into Alabama at Talladega and then Bessemer, a suburb of Birmingham. The twenty-sixth week started at Memphis, Tenn., 22, then the home run began by crossing the Mississippi River into Arkansas at Helena followed by Monticello, Pine Bluffs, Little Rock and Hot Springs. The next and last full week had them in Hope followed by Hugo and Durant, Okla., then Bonham, Denison and Dehton, Texas. The final stand of the season was played Monday, November 5, in Wichita Falls, completing a tour of twenty states and 13,156 miles. Overall business had been most satisfactory.

This war year of 1918 was a year of retrenchment, the show cutting back from the 42 cars it had traveled on for the last few years to 30 — 28 back and two in advance. Just where the cuts were made we do not know for sure. There were indications that the cages in the menagerie were reduced and that only seven elephants, five large ones and the two "punks", Kas and Mo, were with it. Also the number of performing horses was greatly reduced, as there were no liberty horses and only a five horse menage act. The only other horses were for the bareback and posing acts. There were some ponies on the show. Also the wild west was out of the after show. And finally the big top was cut back to four poles reducing the amount of canvas, poles, seats, ring curbs and other paraphernalia as well as the men needed to handle it.

Another significant change for 1918 was that the show would keep completely west of the Mississippi River, away from the eastern railroads which were so heavily involved with wartime traffic. Their experience with railroad delays in the latter part of 1917 had convinced Gentry that the east was no place for the show to be if it wanted to make all its dates and not miss any performances. The show was to take full advantage of the war and patriotism in other ways though. Its color scheme was red, white and blue.

After a lapse of three years Albuquerque was again chosen as the opening stand for Saturday, April 4. The town joined into the war spirit by declaring the day a holiday and participating in the parade making it last from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., although probably it would be more accurate to say that Sells-Floto participated in the town's parade in view of its length. But in any event, it was a most successful opening, for the show did the biggest business it had ever before done in Albuquerque.

After going to El Paso, Texas, for its following Monday date, the show then moved west as it had in years past, although not as rapidly. It did not reach California at El Centro until

Monday, April 22. In between it was in New Mexico at Las Cruces, Silver City and Deming followed by Arizona stands at Douglas, Bisbee, a Sunday afternoon only stand at Benson, Miami, Globe, Safford, Tuscon, Phoenix and Yuma.

At San Bernadino 23, the show picked up what was to be the big menagerie feature for the season, a "gorilla" named Colossus, reminding us of Gargantua who was to come along some twenty years later. However, Colossus was actually not a gorilla, but a large nine year old chimpanzee. But he was big and the show could be sure that only rarely would anyone suspect or know that he was not actually a gorilla. They then finished out April at Riverside, Pomona, Anaheim, San Diego, Santa Ana and Long Beach.

May started in Pasadena followed by Los Angeles 2-4. These first two weeks gave the show good business only in spots. However, the addition of seven lion cubs from three lionesses in the menagerie during this period gave the show some added publicity. And from Los Angeles north business began to pick up. Some of the stops were at Santa Barbara 7, Salinas 9, Palo Alto 11, Fresno 14, Taft 18 where they had a very dusty lot, Bakersfield 20, Selma 22 where they had a two thirds afternoon and a packed night show, Oakland 28 with a very unusual three mile haul to the lot, and San Jose 29. Then they arrived in San Francisco for four days, May 30-June 2, playing their second and last Sunday show of the season. And Sunday afternoon brought the largest crowds of the stand, a packed house, followed in the evening by less than a half house, the poorest attendance of the four days. Decoration Day matinee was practically a full house while the rest of the performances were between a half and three quarters full. Overall the business in San Francisco was only fair to good, somewhat below expectations.

The Billboard reviewed the show there with an unusually good descrip-



tive account of the show as a whole and it might be interesting to quote it for the most part. "While not a feature of the name this season the Sells-Floto Circus can be called 'Circus Beautiful'. 'Champion Shows of the World' is the title which greets those who have the pleasure of getting a view of the train, and the performance surely makes a strong bid for the credit.

"H.B. Gentry has the credit for putting more real circus property and entertainment into 28 cars than any aggregation has ever before enjoyed. The show is compact, loaded 'to an inch' on the train and the performance fast and enjoyable. From the entry, or 'Birth of a Rainbow' til the last clown acrobat in the Delnos act strikes the net there is not a wait. Equestrian Director Wells shoots 'em over one after another in fine shape.

"The Menagerie is of but medium size but contains some strong features. The big Hipp; Colossus, the Gorilla; six tiny fluffy lion cubs (one must have died); and Sunrise, Otto Floto's Palamino equine discovery are as strong menagerie feature as will be found anywhere. In addition there are ostriches, leopards, tigers, horned horse, the hyenas and the big elephants.

"The performance started with the pageant 'The Birth of a Rainbow' and

The banner line of Doc Palmer's side show is pictured on the midway in 1917. The red ticket wagon on the right later was used on Gollmar Bros. Circus in 1922. Pfening Collection.

A few of the parade wagons are shown in the back yard at Waycross, Georgia on October 8, 1917. Pfening Collection.

consists of the following displays.

No. 2 — Ring 1: Sweeney and Newton, double trapeze; Rose Russell, swinging ladder; Geraldine, equilibrium de lux; Stage: Viola, a tiny Miss in juggling acrobatics and iron jaw novelty. Ring 2: somersault bounding wire, George Cole; swinging ladder, Eleanor Cole; swinging perch, Emma.

No. 3 — Ring 1: Five elephants performed by Minnie Thompson, finishing with performance by Snyder who carries his trainer on his tusks while walking on his hind legs. Ring 2: baby elephants performed by Bertha Wilkes.

No. 4 — Rings and Stage: Revolving tables and unrideable mules, Homer Hobson, Jr., Prof. Scheck and Simon Rogers.

No. 5 — Ring 1: Statuary horse, Pasha. Stage: Statuary girls. Ring 2: Statuary horse, Snowflake. All waits between changes in horses are well-covered by menage riders comprising Minnie Thompson, Mrs. Wells, Simon Rogers, Louise Greibel and Mrs. Delno.

No. 6 — Clown entry. The 'Famous Forty' — Count'em

No. 7 — Lady principal acts. Ring 1: Hodgini billed as 'Original Miss Daisy' in a fast rosin back number. Ring 2: Estella and Homer Hobson.

No. 8 — Fire house and clown intermission

No. 9 — Ring 1: La France Rose Troupe, tight wire. Stage: Sweeney and Newton in a novelty sensational iron jaw act ending with the wonderful iron jaw whirl of Beatrice Sweeney. Ring 2: Luckey Troupe, slack wire.

No. 10 — Ring 1: Riding collies, Simon Rogers. Stage: Lanboy, picturesque cyclery. Ring 2: Riding fox terriers, Leo Hamilton.

No. 11 — Ring 1: Contortion act, To the Frog; Frieda Biggs, slack wire; Ida Delno, novelty hand balancing. Stage: Paul Breschard Family, beautiful flexible equilibrists. Ring 2: Les Legerts, Ruth and Gus, potpourri equilibrists; The Famous Lindsay, contortionist.

No. 12 — Ring 1: Aerial revolving teeth acts (iron jaw). Two Kincaid Sisters. Stage: The Three Luckey Sisters. Ring 2: Two Elnor Sisters. All beautifully costumed.

No. 13 — Ring 1: Umarda (Hodgini) and his troupe of bareback Indians. Ring 2: Powhaskys (Hobson Family) troupe of bareback Indians. Act illuminated and dressed with red fire and teepees, various feats of juggling on bareback being presented. The nearest thing to a double carrying act or jockey act on the show.

A canvas spool wagon is shown in front of the big top during the 1917 season. Pfening Collection.





Kas and Mo the baby elephants are shown pulling a small cannon in the 1917 Sells-Floto Circus parade. Carver Photo Collection.

No. 14 — Bertha Beeson (Herbert Beeson) in one of the classiest dancing wire numbers ever seen here. Well costumed and presented. Four Roman soldiers carry the performer onto the stage. The one 'stop music' act on the program.

No. 15 — The Six Costellos, acrobats on the center stage.

No. 16 — Rings 1 and 2: The Delnos in an aerial comedy bar act.

"The feature of the concert is that it is different. A ballet of sixteen girls, elaborately costumed and trained by George L. Myers presents excellent popular song and tableau numbers on the center stage in front of a special setting.

"The feature of the parade is the cleanliness and brilliance of the paraphernalia, costumes and the fact that every den in the show is included and is an open one. The big outstanding feature of the parade is the baggage stock. Fine, fat, well matched and beautifully groomed, the big blacks, dapples and sorrels attract much audible attention in every town at every corner. 'The finest set of baggage stock we ever saw' is the general verdict."

Comparing this program with those immediately preceding it we can see how the show had been cut back. But then because so many of the performers had been called into service it was a problem for all shows to present an adequate and all round performance. Continued advertisements for performers, musicians and workers of all kinds in *The Billboard* by Sells-Floto as well as other shows throughout the 1918 season was evidence of the problems the war was giving to the circus world. In spite of these problems, however, the show carried on and did a good job.

After leaving San Francisco going

across the bay to Vallejo 3, the ferry service was such that they did not arrive in time to give an afternoon show. At Chico 5 and Redding 6 they did not put up the menagerie tent. They entered Oregon at Medford 8 and were in Salem 13 and then into Washington at Vancouver 15. Portland 17-18 gave the show the first heavy rain of the season, but it had stopped by 10 a.m. Monday so that attendance was not hurt. Tacoma 22 ended the eleventh week. At Seattle 24-25 they had a lot that was split by a street which they blocked off by canvas between the menagerie and the big top. A 132 mile run into Wenatchee resulted in an 11 a.m. arrival, no parade and a late matinee. The season was now about half over with no serious problems. In spite of some competition from Al. G. Barnes business overall had been satisfactory.

The show now began to edge eastward. Spokane was played July 1 and Moscow, Ind., 2. The next stand, Pomeroy, Wash., was lost due to the wreck of a train on the railroad delaying all traffic. At Walla Walla 4 the dining tent was blown down in the afternoon, fortunately after the July 4th dinner had been served. By July 10 the show was in Utah at Ogden followed by Salt Lake City 11. The following day was spent enroute 528 miles into Cheyenne. There was a feed stop at

The big top pole wagon is pictured with an eight horse hitch in Sioux Falls, S.D. on August 12, 1918. Pfening Collection.



A string of stock cars in 1918. These cars are believed to be only 50 or 55 feet long. Carver Photo Collection.

Point of Rocks and a late arrival on Saturday, July 13, at Cheyenne in spite of the full travel day allowed, resulting in the cancellation of the parade and a late matinee.

After Cheyenne the show played Denver 15 for one day only, followed by Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Boulder, Ft. Collins and Greeley. This completed fifteen weeks on the road and 8,632 miles of travel, or 575 per week. This rather large mileage shows one of the problems at that time of showing in the far west. In another ten weeks to the season's end in the plains states west of the Mississippi but east of the Rockies the show would average only 430 miles per week. From this time on there were no late arrivals except one at Fairfield, Ia., caused by the heaviest rain of the season the night before at Muscatine on Aug., 16 resulting in the show not being loaded until 3 a.m.

This year the staff had some new names. But it is most interesting that H.B. Gentry was listed as, not only General Manager, but now also as President, indicating that Tammen had really relinquished control. To what extent Gentry may have been acting as an agent for outside interests is an interesting speculation. The American Circus Corp., did of course, buy the show at the end of the 1920 season. We also know that Gentry did act as undercover agent for the A.C.C.



in their purchase of the Sparks circus some years later and so we can suspect that he may have been acting in some such role here. Frank Gentry was the General Agent and Fred Morgan, Treasurer, while most of the advance agents and advertising crews were also new. However, the department heads for the most part were holdovers from previous years. And it is interesting that inspite of the war there were 26 men in the band.

The week of July 22 found the show in Nebraska at Alliance, Broken Bow for a matinee only, Grand Island, York, Fairbury and Beatrice. The next week wound up Nebraska at Shenandoah and Creston where Snyder "almost stampeded" during the parade but was "miraculously" brought under control before he had done any damage. Although he was not aware of it, his rambunctious and troublesome life had only about a year to go. The rest of the week was in Iowa at Leon, Charlton, Ottumwa and Sigourney. The next two and a half weeks were all spent in Iowa except for August 6 at Rock Island, Ill., the only date east of the Mississippi. All stands were relatively small towns.

On Wednesday, August 21, they moved into Missouri at Milan. It was during this week that Doc Palmer said business for his side show at a "stan-

The Sells-Floto train is shown here with a group of flat cars. The snubber post is shown on the flat on the right indicating this was the "runs" flat for unloading that section. Carver Photo Collection.

dard price of 25 cents" had been phenomenal throughout the season. It is noteworthy that there was no side show band, a casualty of the manpower shortage during the war years, but that music was provided by an air calliope played by J.H. Del Vecchio who was later prominent in the American Circus Corporation shows. The side show line-up was as follows: Carl Traneno, two headed man; Honduras Twins, with the big snake; Lizette Smith, bag puncher; the Nellers, mentalists; Palmo, magician; Chief Ogawa, pygmy; Prince Kanaka, bushman; W.J. Gower, glassblower; and a cage of monkeys. There were three ticket boxes on the front of the show.

At Fulton 26 they had one of the biggest days of the season. Two days later at Columbus, the pit show, dressing top and draft stock top were blown down during the matinee. There was no damage and no one was hurt. On Monday, September 2, they were in Kansas

The cook house range wagon is pictured leaving the runs in 1918. Range wagons like this were used on many of the larger circuses. Carver Photo Collection.



The Homer Hobson family of bareback riders were a feature of the 1917 performance of Sells-Floto. Burt Wilson Collection.

City, Mo., followed by Holton, Kans. Most of the next two weeks were in Kansas at Abilene 9, Independence 12, and Winfield 19, ending that week at Ponca City, Okla. The next week except for Alva was spent back in Kansas including Wichita 19. The twenty-fifth and last week of the season was the home run played in Garden City, Kans., 23, Lamar, Colo., 24, Las Animas 25, La Junta 26, Trinidad 27 and ending the season at Walsenburg 28.

The total miles for the season, including the 171 into Denver, was 13,111, the shortest the show had played in some years.

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THE "BULLS" NAMED ALICE

By Chang Reynolds

The name "ALICE" has often been selected to designate an elephant during the constantly changing story of the circus and zoo in America. In fact, some fifteen animals have been born that name or a variant of it. While many of these beasts have passed quietly through the circus and zoo scene, a few have become noteworthy. Most of them have been less than imposing creatures, other than their elephantine proportions; others have been outstanding examples of pachyderm design.

Two elephants named "ALICE" began their circus life early in this century and continued their activities beyond the half-century mark. The first to be discussed lived for nearly sixty years which made her one of the longest-lived elephants in the records; the other was the female responsible for four offspring born during the early years of the century. The former, (for this paper she will be termed ALICE #1) began her career with the Sun Bros. Circus in 1903 and remained with it through 1918. After that year she toured with the Johnny J. Jones Exposition until 1933 when R.W. Rogers of the Barnett Bros. Circus obtained her. She spent about four and one-half seasons with that show and in mid-season 1938 she was rented to the Shelby Bros. Circus. Rogers used her on his Barnett Show in 1939 and on his Wallace Bros. Circus in 1940. He then rented her to Beers-Barnes. During the remaining war years she was leased to this same circus and, when Rogers died in 1946, she was sold to it. She finished her career with Beers-Barnes and died at Hialeah, Florida, in the spring of 1960. Estimating that Alice was at least a year or two old when she arrived on Sun Bros. Circus, she must have been approaching sixty years of age when her life ended.

The second ALICE, introduced in the opening paragraphs, was delivered to the Denver quarters of the Sells-Floto Circus in the fall of 1904. She came from Thompson & Dundee, of Luna Park, New York. She remained on the Floto Show through 1916 during which time she gave birth to three young — Tambo, Hutch, Little Miracle, and began a fourth male offspring which was born after she went to the Salt Lake City Zoo. Its name was Prince Utah and it lived for the longest time. All of the youngsters were born in the spring — either March or April — and lived from about one month to ten months. The sire in all births was Snyder. Alice went to the zoo in 1917 and I was told by a keeper there that she had died in 1954. I have heard from

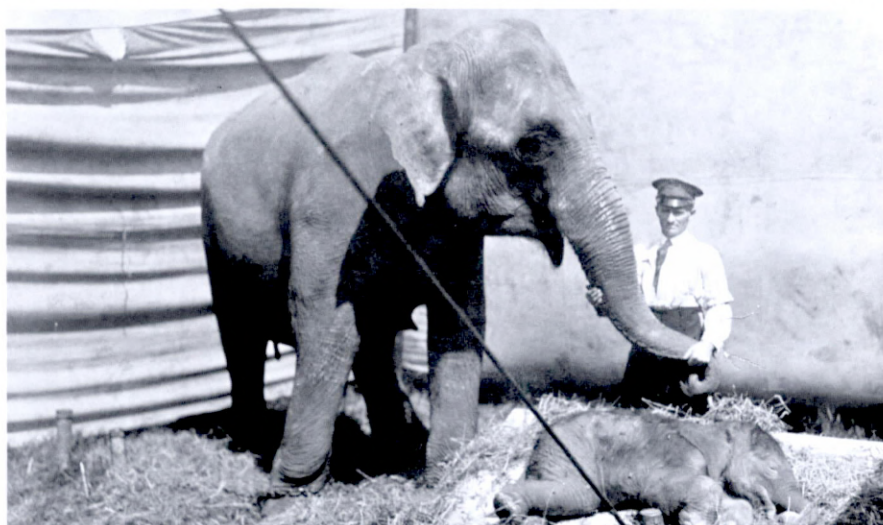


Alice number one was owned by the Johnny J. Jones Exposition carnival. She is the larger elephant on the right in front of the midway circus of the carnival around 1928. Pfening Collection.

other sources that the date was a year earlier. In any event, she was a few years past the fifty year mark when she died.

There were additional elephants named ALICE in those early years of the century. One of these, well-known to many circus patrons, was one of the first elephants on the Haag Show. She and the famous Tip were both on the show when it was a wagon show in the early days of the century and were with it when it went on rails for the 1909-1914 seasons. Rudy Gonzales was the elephant handler on this circus. Later,

Alice number two gave birth to four babies. She is shown here with Fred Ailspaw and one of her babies on the Sells-Floto Circus. Pfening Collection.



Tip died and an elephant named Judy worked with ALICE. ALICE and Judy were on Allan King's Circus in 1942. This famous elephant died on 12 March 1944 at Medora, Indiana. She had been with American circuses for forty years and was probably slightly under forty-five years of age at her death.

There was another ALICE that began with Thompson & Dundee at Coney Island. She was with a group of four (ALICE, Queen, Punch, and Gip) that were worked by George Barlow at Luna Park. In 1908, the New York Zoological Park obtained her and she arrived at the Bronx Zoo on 3 September. She did not take easily to zoo life and caused some problems but finally became one of the fine exhibits at that zoo. She is well-known for her relationship with the African forest elephant, Congo, at that location. She deteriorated rapidly in 1942 and was destroyed on 27 August, 1943. It was estimated that she was approximately fifteen years old when the zoo obtained



The Haag Show Alice was worked by Helen Haag as late as 1942 on the Allan King show. She is pictured here with her first trainer Rudy Gonzales in the spring of 1917 in the Mighty Haag winter quarters in Shreveport, La. Pfening Collection.

her in 1908. These records would give her an age of about fifty years when executed.

Another ALICE of those early years was an animal usually called "BARNUM SHOW ALICE," although Bill Woodcock usually referred to her as "Bughouse Barnum Show Alice." If his name described her character, it probably was due to her checkered career. As the name indicates, she started with the Barnum & Bailey Circus and Jack McCracken once told me that he had seen her with the Campbell Bros. Circus in 1908 and 1909. Woodcock reported that she went to William P. Hall from the Barnum Show and this would indicate that the Lancaster dealer disposed of her to the Campbell Show temporarily. In 1914 she was with the Young Buffalo Ranch and the following year was on Barton & Bailey Circus. In all probability she was on lease from Hall to these shows, for McCracken reports being with her that winter when she was with a group of elephants leased from Hall for the Frank Spellman Indoor Circus. In 1916 she was with Wheeler Bros. Circus, and then came two years (1917 and 1918) with the R.T. Richards Circus. In 1919, Hall leased her to the Atterbury Bros. Circus in mid-season and in 1920 and 1921 she was with the Howe's Great London Circus. In 1922 she was on the Gollmar Show, and then this much-traveled beast settled down to a single owner. George H. Christy bought her in the spring of 1923 and she remained on the Christy Show until the end of 1932. She died in quarters after the show came off the road that season.

The Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago had an elephant named ALICE in 1900 (and earlier) which was sold to the zoo in Colorado Springs in 1902. She thrived there under the name of PRINCESS ALICE (from someplace in eastern Asia) until the "Big Snow" of December 1913 when she froze to death.

In 1880, the Barnum & Bailey Circus had an elephant named ALICE that preceded "Bughouse Barnum Show Alice." It is not known when this animal arrived on the circus or

anything concerning her earlier life. She perished in a fire at the Bridgeport quarters on 11 November 1887.

During the mid-twenties of this century there were a couple of well-known ALICE elephants. The first of these was purchased by William P. Hall from Louis Ruhe in 1925. She seems to have remained with the elephants on the farm rather than being on lease and finally was purchased by the Cole Bros. Circus after the 1935 touring season closed. She ended up in Clyde Beatty's possession and he had her at his zoo in Florida for a time in the late 'Thirties. She was purchased by a private owner who resided in South Carolina who sold her all most immediately to the Grant Park Zoo in Atlanta, Georgia. She was still at this zoo a few years ago and may still be there. If so, she must be past fifty years of age.

The American Circus Corporation shipped two young elephants to the Overton Park Zoo in Memphis, Tennessee, in May, 1926. One of these, ALICE, was about six weeks old at the time. It was an interesting deal, since the zoo gave the Corporation over \$3,500 plus the elephant, Margaret, for the two young animals. ALICE lived until 31 October 1955 at the zoo.

In 1922, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus added a group of young elephants to their herd. These animals arrived on 5 November. One of these, ALICE, was teamed with Lizzie in the unloading and lot work of the show during the late 'Thirties. In the fall of 1941, she was one of the eleven elephants that died of poison at Atlanta, Georgia.

In 1932 the Benson Animal Farm of Nashua, New Hampshire, obtained an elephant which they named ALICE. The next year she was sold to the Roger Williams Park Zoo at Providence, Rhode Island. She was reported there in 1944 by D.J. Harkins, Director of the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston, and in 1959.

Of more recent vintage was the Franco Richards elephant named ALICE. He had her in 1945 and 1946 and perhaps other years in the 'Forties. By 1948 she was on the King Bros. Circus and staged a complete runaway at Malone, New York, that year. There was a report that this ALICE was



The "Bughouse Barnum Show Alice" is pictured here on the R.T. Richards Circus in 1917. Frank Farrell Photo.

killed in a truck wreck on the King Bros. Circus in 1952. However, the show still had an ALICE in 1954 and this animal later went to the James E. Strates Shows. She was with Strates for over thirteen years beginning with 1956.

The St. Louis Zoo obtained an elephant in April 1955 which was named ALICE. She was at the zoo for over a dozen years and may still be there. The Hogle Park Zoo, Salt Lake City, had ALICETTE, for a few years in the late 'Forties and early 'Fifties. She was destroyed due to illness.

Still another ALICE of the 1940s, and an animal that this writer knew very well, belonged to the Tom Packs Circus. Later, in the early 1950s, she, and the other four in this act, were on the Polack Circus. In 1957, 1958, and 1959 the five were at the World Jungle Compound, Thousand Oaks, California. During all of these years Slivers Madison worked them. In 1960, the group went on the tour again — this time with the Rudy Bros. Circus. Eugene Scott was in charge and worked them for the next several years, through 1964, when they sold to Circus Bell in Mexico. Scott delivered them to that show in December 1964. He told me at a later date that ALICE died in the spring of 1965.

In conclusion it should be noted that all of these elephants were of the Asiatic species. None of them, with the exception of the Bronx Zoo ALICE and the King Bros. ALICE, gave any more trouble to their handlers than elephants ordinarily do. Those two quieted down in later years for there are no further reports on them as delinquents. Many of these elephants were fine looking specimens, and all of them contributed to the pachyderm history of this country.

Information on which these notes are based comes from my own observations, from Bill Woodcock, from Buckles Woodcock, from Ted Gallup, from Jack McCracken, and other professionals of the circus business. Various publications, mostly newspapers too numerous to mention, have been consulted for years to build up my collection of elephant notes.



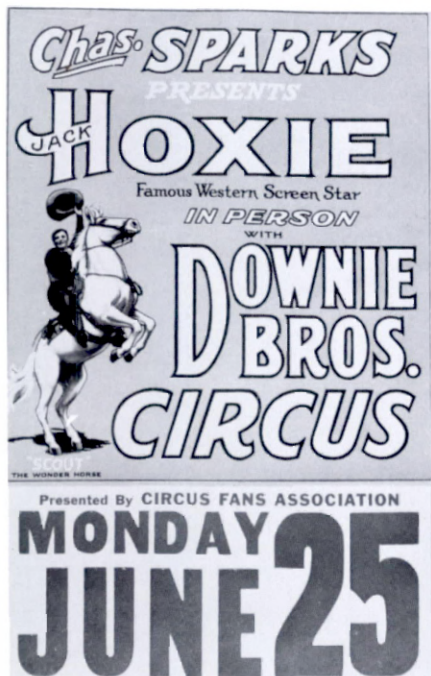
By Joseph T. Bradbury

Part IV — The 1934 and 1935 Seasons

The 1934 Season

As 1934 came upon the scene, Charlie Sparks viewed the coming season with much optimism. The depression was now definitely on the wane, although complete recovery would be some years away. The Roosevelt administration had been in office almost a year and had taken very radical and even drastic economic measures (in

Photo No. 1 — Downie Bros. litho advertising Jack Hoxie. Date tail is for show's stand during CFA convention at Norwich, Conn., June 25, 1934. Color scheme has white on solid red background for top portion and red date on white. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.



light of the times) to combat the depression. The long range effects of some of the Roosevelt prescriptions are still debated to this date but the fact remained that many people had gone back to work, even if working for the government pushing a shovel, and the general populace had more money in their pockets than they had seen in several years. Smart showmen, such as Sparks and his Downie Bros. Circus, were aware of this and figured many who had found it necessary to forgo amusements due to lack of money for so long would no doubt patronize the right kind of show in 1934. So Sparks decided to improve his performance, make it more versatile, and increase the physical layout, including seating capacity, for the coming season. In fact the 1934 show was physically as large as Downie Bros. would ever be. In future years the menagerie would increase somewhat but the big top and seating would remain the same.

The shops at Macon quarters opened January 1 with Fred Delvey in charge of the carpenter and blacksmith departments while Vic Paralta headed the paint crew. A major project was the building of a new ticket and office semi which when completed became the largest of any show on the road. Visitors who saw it on opening day said it was marvelously equipped and was the "last word" in motor equipment. A new 28 ft. semi was also built and a number of the principal vehicles were thoroughly repaired and improved. Delvey said his shop crew averaged reworking one semi a week on the program to update the motorized equipment. As customary all vehicles were given such repairs as necessary to make them ready for the scheduled opening in April.

The Jan. 13, 1934 Billboard carried the following advertisement, "Downie

Bros. Circus Wants Performers. In all lines except riders. Sideshow people. Clowns who can leap. Also circus painter. Seal act and electrician. Have for Sale performing elephant, lions, and blue seat stringers. Address Charles Sparks, Macon, Ga."

It is assumed the advertisement brought most of the desired response, however the show did not acquire a seal act until 1935. The elephant for sale was probably Teddy, the male tusker, which Sparks did sell following the 1936 season, however none were sold in the spring of 1934 and the herd remained the same — Teddy, Tena, Babe, Queen, and Pinto.

George Singleton, who formerly was in charge of the Sparks Circus canvas, and more recently had been with Al G. Barnes, was hired to take charge of the new spread of canvas which was ordered for delivery prior to start of the season. On opening day observers said the show had a new big top, a 120 ft. round with three 40 ft. middles, a new sideshow, 60 with two 30's, and a menagerie top, which was a 60 with four 30's. The latter was practically new, it having been acquired late in the 1933 season to replace the tent lost in the fire at Gainesville, Ga.. A fourth middle piece was added to the menagerie top for the 1934 season. Singleton arrived in Macon several weeks after the shops opened and immediately put a force of men to work building new seating, including a new grandstand. When completed the show

Photo No. 2 — Downie Bros. one sheet upright posted in 1934 featuring Teresa Morales has title in red and wording "Big 3 Ring" in blue. Aerialists wardrobe is pink and blue on yellow background. Strip at bottom is in blue. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.



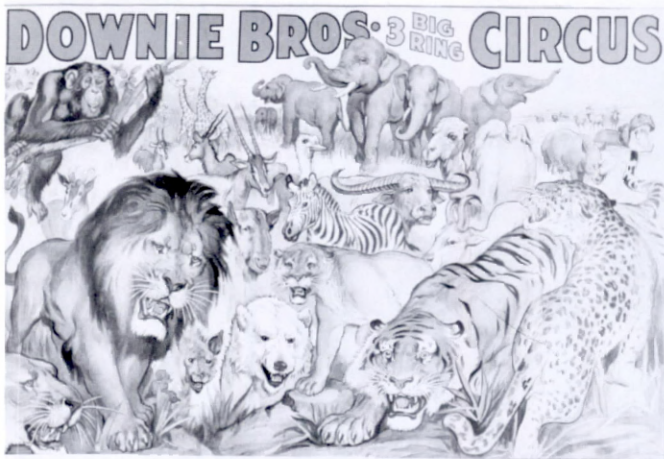


Photo No. 3 — Beautiful one sheet flat showing all kinds of wild animals was posted at Huntington, W. Va., May 4, 1934. Color scheme has red title on white sky and multiple colored animals on light green grass. Date tail is red and blue. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

had grandstand chairs on both sides, 10 high, and blues on the ovals 14 high.

Fortunately the weather was usually delightful during the winter and early spring months in Macon which aided greatly in the large amount of work being done.

The Jan. 27, 1934 Billboard reported that the show was adding a number of ring stock and that equestrian numbers would be a big Downie feature during the coming season. It said that Sparks had hired Carlos Carreon and his wife, Etta, and purchased their horses. The Carreons had recently been with Ringling-Barnum. A number of high school horses were purchased from the Ragsdale stables near Atlanta and it was mentioned Sparks was also negotiating for several other fancy gaited equines.

Some weeks later it was reported that Carlos and Etta Carreon were putting the finishing touches on the high and broad jumping horse acts as well as the 14 horse menage act. Equestrian director, Allen Hauser was also busy working stock while elephant supt., Larry Davis, was making a number of changes in the elephant routines. Mrs. Sparks supervised the making of all new wardrobe and acts recently signed for the performance included the Alex Brock Troupe of comedy aerial bar artists and Anna Brock's single trapeze with muscle grind finish routine.

The 1934 staff included Charles Sparks, manager; Charles Katz, asst. manager; William Morgan, secretary; Clint Shuford, treasurer; Frank McGuyre, legal adjuster; Jerome Harriman, general agent; Harry Burns, contracting press agent; Irish Horan, general press agent; Harry Mack, press agent back with show;

Jacy Hoyt, 24 hour agent; James R. Gallagher, banner agent; Clyde Williard, in charge of advance trucks and billers; Allen Hauser, equestrian director; Walter Beatty, reserve seat tickets; Lois Lamb, wardrobe mistress; George Singleton, supt. big top canvas; Frank Dill, sideshow canvas; Irving Arnold, ring stock; Larry Davis, menagerie and elephants; Soldier Lonsdorf, properties; Joe Gilligan, master of transportation; Joe Robinson, electrician; James Davis, steward; William A. McNeill, master mechanic; M. Mallman, supt. privileges.

The advance department used a total of 5 trucks and 4 sedans, employing 17 men.

Roxy Flger put into use a new midway dining car which drew many favorable comments all through the 1934 season. This new vehicle plus the beautiful new office and ticket semi gave additional class to the midway.

Downie Bros. opened the 1934 season at Macon, Ga. on April 9. The April 21, 1934 Billboard covered the event and reported that the show got off to a very good start, the equipment made a wonderful appearance, and the spec and leaps led off an excellent program. A capacity crowd was on hand for the matinee with an overflow in the evening. Although reporters had about abandoned the once popular custom of giving "counts" of the vehicles used to transport motorized circuses it was mentioned this time that there were 110 pieces of rolling stock with the Downie show. This included show owned vehicles, performers and staffers automobiles, house trailers, etc. The customary street parade took place in the morning and the matinee began at 2.

The 1934 performance was listed as follows:

1. Spec — Century of Circus Progress, led by Dixie Starr and included four girl flag bearers, bandsmen costumed as Hindus, tom-tom beaters, 10 flower girls, 8 riding Arabs, clown on mule, juvenile cow-



Photo No. 4 — One sheet flat featuring the Morales Family was posted in 1934. Color scheme has red title with overall cream background. Oval insert is in blue. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

boy, 8 clowns, 5 elephants and 4 camels. The pageant concluded with elephants and dancing girls in the three rings and Ella Harris on Tena, the smallest elephant, doing fan dancing on the track. Following this were introductions of Jack Hoxie, western picture star, and announcement of the aftershow.

2. Leaps, Tony Scala (double somersault); Pedro Morales, Bobby Behee, Johnny Bossler, Ray Leonhart, Merlin Henkle, and Minert DeOrlo, clown cop. Scala goes over 4 horses first, and then 5 elephants.

3. Ring 1, Charles Poplin's riding dogs. Ring 3, Irving Arnold's dogs, monkeys, and ponies.

4. Clown boxing in center ring, Chester (Bobo) Barnett and Jo Jo Bowen.

5. Pedro Morales, slide for life, and Mickey Larkin's head slide.

6. Riding Acts. Ring 1, George Hanneford. Ring 2, Isobel McCree, Ring 3, Oscar Lowande, Jr.

7. Swinging ladders, little Dorothy Morales, Marion Shuford, Jamie Walters, Cora Bailey, Georgia Whitesides, Helene Butters, Inez Butters, Martha Princepini, Billie Manning, Myrtle McGuyre, Miss Brock, Miss Barnett.

8. Elephants worked by Ella Harris.

9. Ring 1, The Larkins (Carl and Mickey), furniture balancing. Ring 3, Five comedy acrobats.

10. Ring 1, Allen Hauser's Barnyard Review, trained pigs. Ring 3, Jewel Poplin's Spitz dogs.

11. Aerial Brocks (3 men) (Prior to the opening performance Charles Forest had broken his leg when he hit the net).

12. Clown walkarounds.

13. Iron jaw act, Butters Sisters, Miss Barnett, Jamie Walters.

14. Clown walkarounds, Pedro and

Toby Tyler on stilts, Tommy Hanneford and others.

15. Ring 1, Carlos Carreon with six liberty horses. Ring 2, Allen Hauser with eight dancing horses. Ring 3, Irvin Arnold with eight ponies.

16. The Funny Ford on track with Roy Leonart, Johnny Bossler, Minert DeOrlo and Shorty Hinkle.

17. High wire act, The Butters Troupe (4 girls, 1 man)

18. Babe "wire walking" elephant (on a narrow plank) by Lary Davis.

19. Clown walkarounds.

20. Miss Brock and Ella Harris, trapeze and muscle grind, Teresa Morales, loop the loop trapeze.

21. George Hanneford's Troupe of Riders, 2 men in tuxedo, 2 women in dainty evening gowns.

22. Concert announcement, Jack Hoxie and Dixie Starr.

23. High school horses ridden by Carlos Carreon, Etta Carreon, Marion Shuford, Ruby Hughes, Jewel Poplin, Billie Manning, Miss Barnett, Helen Linger, Ella Harris, Myrtle McGuyre, Irvin Arnold, and Jasper Davis. Miss Shuford does her side saddle fallback and Miss Carreon rode Red Robin in rhumba dance. High jumping horses ridden by Carols and Etta Carreon, Ruby Hughes, Jewel Poplin, Billie Manning, Allen Hauser, Irvin Arnold, and Jasper Davis.

24. Two Brocks, high perch; The Larkins, high perch; Teresa Morales, heel catches on flying trapeze.

25. Closing Spec, an Indian Fantasy, dozens of whooping Indians, a few riders, teepees in each ring, burning red lights for fires, and the unfolding of enormous American flags from the top.

The aftershow had a fair matinee and good attendance at night. Jack Hoxie's troupe included, in addition to himself,

Photo No. 5 — One sheet posted in 1934 depicts equestrian acts and has red title on cream sky. Rearing horse in center is against orange oval insert. Menage horses are on green grass. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

Dixie Starr, his leading lady in pictures, cowboy orchestra, Lonesome Joe, Jesse Cooley, and Johnny Marion, Charles and Jewel Poplin, Jack and Ruby Hughes, Carlos and Etta Carreon, and Jose Florein, in charge of Hoxie's stock.

Rodney Harris was band director with a total of 13 men, including himself. Jake Mills, later well known circus owner, played cornet.

The review article said the cages were neatly arranged in the large menagerie tent. Besides the elephants, animals included camels, lions, tigers, leopards, monkeys, anteater, and sloth bear.

The sideshow had a nice attendance in the afternoon and did very good business at night. The lineup included Milton Robbins, manager; Ralph Redden, asst. manager and inside lecturer, and the following attractions, Mitzie Robbins, mentalist and musical act; The Reddens, punch and judy, magic, and sword box; Gertrude Redden, impalement act; Anna Loving, large snakes; The MacCleains, Scottish pipers; Mrs. Ed E. Woods, trained cockatoos; Al Freitas and Company, Hawaiian entertainers; Eddie Washington's 11 piece band and minstrels.

CFA Roger Boyd's movie of the 1934 Downie Bros. street parade shows that the big show band rode the Washington Crossing the Delaware semi, the sideshow band on a straight bed truck decorated as Georgia Minstrels, and the clown band on a straight bed truck, No. 55, decorated with several large paintings of apes. Also in the march were the open cages, elephants, camels, numerous mounted people and the air calliope which brought up the rear. A large truck titled "Jack Hoxie Special", which was Jack's living quarters and pulled a trailer carrying his horse was an interesting vehicle in the parade.

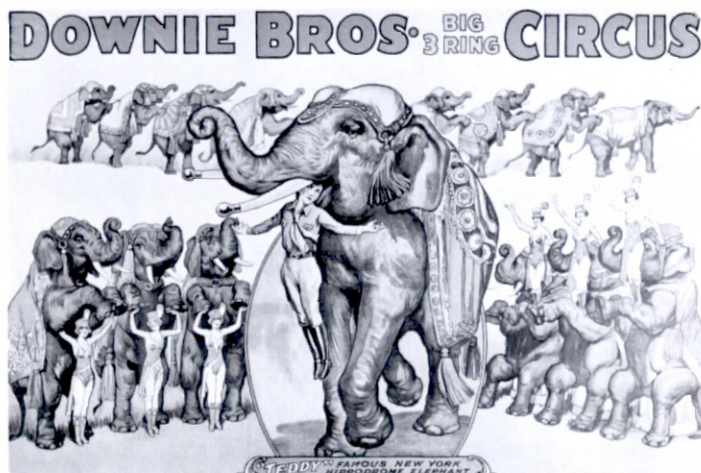
Following the opener the show played Georgia dates at Newnan, Marietta, and Toccoa, then crossed

South Carolina in two stands and entered North Carolina where it remained a week. The third week saw the show in Virginia's coastal area which was followed by a westward move across the state and on into West Virginia. The show played Hinton, W.Va., May 1, then Beckley, Charleston, Huntington, Logan, Parkersburg, and Wheeling. Pennsylvania came next with first stand at Charleroi, May 9. A total of eight stands were played in this Keystone State territory which had become used to seeing the Downie show almost every season.

Very little information appeared in The Billboard concerning the show's first few weeks of the season, however the May 12, 1934 issue advised that Downie had been doing wonderful business since the opening considering some very inclement weather. Much rough mountainous territory had also been traveled later. The article mentioned that Isobel McCree of the Riding Hannefords was returning to the act after laying off since the opening with a broken arm. Evidently she was injured in Macon. It was pointed out that the public and press alike had been highly complimentary of the show's wardrobe and the reporter observed 20 horses were used in the menage number and 22 in the liberty acts. The Jack Hoxie aftershow had been holding much of the crowd lately. Virginia stands at Norfolk, Richmond, Newport News, and Charlottesville had given capacity business. Visitors had praised the new office semi and said that Milt Robbins sideshow with its fine bannerline was on par with the larger railroad shows.

The good business done by the show so far was indicative that 1934 was to

Photo No. 6 — One sheet posted in 1934 features the elephants. Center insert shows Teddy, male tusker. Color scheme has red title on white sky. Green grass is at bottom. Head carry in center is against orange oval insert. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.



be a fine circus year for most circuses. Hagenbeck-Wallace had completed a very fine stand in the Chicago Coliseum and other shows were also praising their early season take. As was usually the case Downie Bros. was getting its share of opposition from other shows. Barnett Bros. was oftentimes close by and at one point during the early weeks the two shows played within 15 miles of each other.

After moving across Pennsylvania the show entered New Jersey at New Brunswick, May 18, then played Elizabeth, Plainfield, Montclair, and Ridgewood before making a single date in New York at Newbury on May 24.

Harry Baugh, veteran circus troupier who was in charge of the Circus Room of the Hotel Cumberland in New York City, a popular night spot of the day, visited Downie at Elizabeth, N.J. and wrote in the Billboard that the show had a fair matinee that day and packed them in at night. The aftershow drew a good percentage of the crowd. Baugh also said that George Hanneford Jr. was on the show for a weekend visit from his school and while there was put through his faces in his father's "riding school" on the lot. Baugh was prophetic when he termed George Jr. a real comer who showed wonderful ability. Young George also did the clown bit in fine style.

The show moved into Connecticut at Stamford, May 25, and played Waterbury the next day. Taunton, May 28, was the first of nine consecutive dates in the old Bay State, after which came New Hampshire stands at Nashua, Manchester, and Concord. The route next took the show into Maine at Portland, June 11, which was followed by ten more days in the state. A return to New Hampshire came at Dover, June 23, then it moved to Norwich, Conn. for a most important engagement on June 25. The Circus Fans Association had selected Norwich as the site for its annual convention and

Photo No. 9 — No. 75, light plant semi, on lot at Newport, R.I., July 4, 1934. Photo by John Cutler. (Charlie Campbell Collection)



THE BIG SHOW IS COMING!
(Season of 1934.)
STAUNTON
SATURDAY
APRIL 28

CHAS. SPARKS presents

DOWNIE BROS.



BIG 3

RING

CIRCUS

TWO SHOWS 2 AND 8 P.M. DOORS OPEN 1 AND 7 P.M.

PRICES
CHILDREN
UNDER 12
25¢
ADULTS
50¢
INCL. TAX

with
JACK HOXIE
FAMOUS
WESTERN
SCREEN STAR
in person



STREET PARADE AT NOON

Newspaper ad for Downie Bros. stand at Staunton, Va., April 28, 1934. Joe Bradbury Collection.

Downie Bros. as the official convention circus. It was the first time CFA had held its convention with a motorized circus but Charlie Sparks, a long time favorite of the organized fans, did not disappoint them in his 1934 edition of Downie Bros. Circus.

Following Norwich the show went again into Mass-achusetts for dates at Framingham, Malden, Watertown, and Brockton. It was at Woonsocket, R.I., June 30, back into Mass-achusetts for Hyannis and Wareham, a return to Rhode Island to play Newport and Westerly, then on to Connecticut for the third time in the season. After several days of jumping back and forth

between Connecticut, Mass-achusetts, and New Hampshire the show then headed into Vermont for four stands with first date coming at Newport, July 16.

While the show was in New England CHS Wes Herwig caught it and recalls his visit as follows.

"I saw Downie Bros. at New Britain, Conn., July 7, 1934. The show had very strong billing that year and featured Jack Hoxie, movie cowboy, Dixie Starr, his leading lady, and 'Bunk' the movie dog. I noted the show was carrying about 25 head of horses and ponies and had added a new ticket office semi and a large Circus Cafe diner on a trailer was on the midway. At this location the parade was not as long as the one I had witnessed two years before with a number of tableau trucks left out of the line-up. However, the weather was extremely hot and they may have cut it for the day and it may not have been the rule all season.

"In the 1934 parade there were two cages of lions, one cage with a leopard and a kangaroo, one cage with two jaguars, one cage with dogs and monkeys, one cage with tigers, and one cage with all monkeys. Also there were four elephants, four camels, and two Roman chariots drawn by two ponies each. Jack Hoxie's house trailer and horse trailer were present and there was a wild west contingent in the march. Show carried no pit show in 1934. Prices for general admission were 50 cents for adults and 25 for children. (Author's note, evidently one elephant did not make parade that day as there were five in the herd. Probably Teddy, the male, which had begun to be troublesome at times was held out).

"A violent storm came up just as the show was ending in the afternoon. As a climax to the extreme heat and rather than venture out into the downpour many patrons stayed for the wild west. However, the storm worsened and high winds threatened to blow down the tent, so the aftershow had to be halted

Photo No. 10 — Charles Sparks standing in front of new ticket and office semi about 1934. Walter B. Hohenadel Collection.



and the crowd dismissed into a torrential rain for safety's sake."

Herwig's observation that the parade was not as long as it was two seasons earlier is well made. No doubt a few units were held out that particular day but generally the Downie Bros. street parade became shorter as the years progressed. This was true of most motorized show parades. In the early years it was a novelty in itself to place just as many trucks as practical in the daily parade but after a few years this novelty wore off and the parades saw fewer and fewer vehicles in the lineup. Eventually there were only the band trucks, cages, calliope, and a very few additional tableau trucks making up the motorized portion of the parade.

In the summer of 1934 the new Federal Highway Act went into effect which was to provide millions for road improvements. It was hailed by motorized show owners saying it would give them a big boost and pointed out the highway program would open up heretofore inaccessible areas for circuses. However the old saying, "With the dog comes the fleas" was still true. The improved highways did help the motorized shows but with it all came the new regulatory agencies, state highway patrols, and it wouldn't be long before show owners would be faced with all kinds of "standards" to meet with their vehicles, convoys would be forbidden, and undue harassment would be the fare in many areas.

Vermont was good to Downie. The best aftershow attendance so far in the season came at Newport. Other stands in the state were also very good which was pleasantly surprising since Downie was the third circus to play Vermont in the last six weeks. Sideshow business was good and at Montpelier, July 17, it was necessary to operate it long after midnight to handle the crowds.

In the meantime practically every circus on the road was reporting far better business than a year ago. Sam Gumpertz, Ringling-Barnum general manager said that show's take was one hundred percent better than in 1933 and Hagenbeck-Wallace and Al G. Barnes, the other Ringling owned shows, were doing well.

Leaving New England Downie went into New York at Glen Falls, July 20, and after three stands in the state moved on to Pennsylvania to play Honesdale and Stroudsburg. Four dates in New Jersey came next. Downie had a big day at Asbury Park while Hunt's Circus at Point Pleasant had a turnaway. The Billboard said that a number of circuses which had headed south switched their route plans and returned northward to take advantage of the good conditions existing in the eastern resort towns. Whether Downie was one of these shows mentioned is



Photo No. 11 — Downie Bros. big top and menagerie on lot, season of 1934. Note new canvas added to make a fourth middle piece in the menagerie top. New ticket and office semi is at lower right. Photo by Eddie Jackson. (Pfening Collection)

not known but the show did head back into New York and went northward to the resort areas upstate. It was at Catskill, August 1, then played Saratoga Springs, Ticonderoga, Plattsburg, and Saranac Lake. A total of 13 stands were played on this New York visit before dipping down into Pennsylvania to catch Sayre. New York stands at Corning and Wellsville

Photo No. 13 — Bill Cody with unidentified woman (possibly Malee Harding) on Downie Bros. lot season of 1935. Dog truck is in background. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection)



followed. While at Rome, N.Y., Aug 11, the show's leopard, Marmala, gave birth to four cubs.

Heading southward Downie returned to Pennsylvania to play Warren, Aug 18, followed by Franklin, McKeesport, and Uniontown.

The Sept. 1, 1934 Billboard said that masses of people lined the streets for the parade at McKeesport which was three hours late due to the slow 110 mile jump from Franklin over a bad road. However, the crowds weren't discouraged by the wait and after the parade passed they thronged to the lot and watched the set-up still in progress. Soon as the sideshow was ready they poured into it and an observer noted both the sideshow and concessions did well even before the big top opened. There was a good matinee crowd and excellent night house. Asst. manager Katz told a reporter the show had experienced a fine season so far. Floyd Crouch joined the Butters Family wire act replacing Helen Linger, wife of Oscar Lowande, Jr. of the Hanneford Riding Act, who returned home for a much needed rest.

Uniontown, Pa. was another good day. Thousands turned out for the street parade and the crowd was on the straw at night.

The swing down through the Pittsburgh area was most profitable. Several weeks earlier there had been quite a bit of flak in the trade publications over the Pittsburgh mayor's refusal to issue Downie a license to play there. According to general agent, Jerome Harriman, he made his original application for a license back in May at which time the mayor had replied by letter that he was not going to allow any "small shows" to play in Pittsburgh. Harriman tried to convince the mayor that Downie Bros. was no small show but his argument proved useless. The mayor's quote in the daily press, "There is no demand for a circus except from a few people who expect to benefit from the sale of certain merchandise, a circus hurts our theaters", drew the ire of many outdoor showmen. The Downie show had played in the Pittsburgh area

for a number of seasons but just what triggered off the mayor's rebuff is not known to the author. It was somewhat of an unusual experience for a Charlie Sparks owned circus. It proves that in those days at times even the best managed shows with the finest reputations ran into situations such as in Pittsburgh where officials in charge just flatly refused to issue a license. The old saying, "you can't fight city hall" meant just that in most places in those days and it was before it was fashionable for the federal courts to lend a willing ear to any and all such complaints. Circus general agents such as Harriman could only move on to another town and try to get a license there.

Moving southward fast the show made West Virginia stands at Morgantown, Grafton, Elkins, and Ronceverte, then moved into Virginia for dates at Christiansburg and Martinsville. August 30 saw the show at Reidsville, N.C. and for the next three weeks the show played in the two Carolinas to some great business. Florence, S.C., Sept. 18, gave a splendid take and all stands in that part of the state were good. Mullins, S.C. the following day which is the largest tobacco center in the state and had not seen a major circus in some time, produced tremendous business for Downie. The show could not use the regular lot because of soft grounds so a last minute change had to be made, however there was not much delay and the street parade went out on time.

The Sept. 29, 1934 Billboard observed that Downie had gotten very fine business on its southern tour but noted the show had not been playing many textile towns as that industry was still in a depressed condition. Competition was lively in the south. Russell Bros., making its first venture into the deep south played in much of the area covered by Downie and would be followed by the 48 car Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus and its great street parade. Russell beat the big trailer into both Augusta and Athens, Georgia but Downie tended to avoid the tremendous competition Hagenbeck-Wallace was providing that season.

Leaving South Carolina Downie moved to Savannah, Ga. for a great two day engagement, Sept. 25-26, where it was under joint sponsorship of the Knights of Columbus and Brotherhood of Temple Mickvy which must have been a real life kind of "Abbie's Irish Rose" arrangement. The lot was at Daffin park and the first day's attendance for both performances was the single day record for paid admissions for the show in 1934. The mother leopard and cubs were feature attraction of the menagerie and drew much favorable press comment.

Eight additional Georgia stands were next played and then the show moved into Alabama for a single date



Photo No. 12 — New office and ticket semi on Downie Bros. lot, season of 1934. Photo by Eddie Jackson.

at Dothan, Oct. 5. Russell Bros. had played the town on Oct. 2 to straw audiences and provided tough opposition.

An extensive tour of Florida came next beginning at Panama City, Oct. 6. After several dates in the Panhandle the show moved over into central Florida then went to the west coast to play St. Petersburg on October 20. Finally it headed on down into the Miami area. Big business in the state was reported and the Nov. 10, 1934 Billboard said that the 21 stands in Florida had produced many full houses. Miami gave two wonderful days business under auspices of the Acacia Club. While in the city Dixie Starr was struck by a taxi on the street but suffered only slight injuries.

The show returned to Georgia at Brunswick, Oct. 31, and played out the remaining ten dates of the 1934 season in its home state. The advance trucks closed Nov. 1 after billing Thomaston the final date set for Nov. 10. The Billboard said that when the advance department would up its duties of the season, Irish Horan, was manager of the cars and had 11 men in his crew. Clyde Willard became ill and had to return to his home where he underwent an operation in September, so Horan took over as car manager until the final billing was completed, then returned to the show to handle his regular duties for remainder of the season.

Following the close the show moved on the short distance to the Macon quarters. The Nov. 24, 1934 Billboard said the show had a good season and that Sparks was well pleased. Work was scheduled to begin in quarters almost at once. The first Sunday back in Macon saw the following shows pass through town, Jethro Almond's Circus, Barnett Bros., Beverly Bros., Kay Bros. and Winstead Minstrels. Personnel from all of them stopped by for a visit to the Downie quarters.

During the week of Nov. 19, sixteen acts from the show were scheduled to

appear at the Macon Shrine Circus under the direction of Joe Ende.

The Dec. 1, 1934 Billboard noted the unusually early preparations for the next season at Macon and commented that all of the animals were now in their winter cages and new materials for construction purposes were expected shortly. The Butters Troupe left after the Macon Shrine Circus to join the Scandals of 1934 Shows. Clyde Willard, now alright following his operation, visited the quarters. The Larkins had already begun work on a new act for 1935 and a week later the Billboard reported that several new trucks would be added to the fleet and matters in general were buzzing in Macon. The flurry of early activity was a sure sign of a good season just completed and anticipation of another good or better one to follow.

The 1935 Season

First reports of quarters activity after the new year came in the Jan. 19, 1935 Billboard which said the shops with Fred Delvey in charge were building a number of new trucks and cages. Other notes said that Allen Hauser was in charge of the ring barn and that several new horses would soon be purchased. Carlos Carreon was working the menage stock.

The early months of 1935 saw the final extensive work done on the Downie Bros. motorized fleet. A large semi for hauling camels was built in the shops and in mid-March Delvey was quoted that he had been turning out new trucks (mostly rebuilt jobs) at rate of two a week. Possibly there were some other vehicles built new from the ground up but most of the work was rebuilding or remodeling. As mentioned earlier the cabs for both straight trucks and tractors which hauled the semis were custom built to include an area adequate for sleeping the driver and housing his personal belongings. The contours of these cabs which had a rounded top portion were a distinctive mark of the Downie fleet. The cages were all somewhat remodeled in the early months of 1935 with most of the work being done on the cabs. A comparison of photos showing the 1931

model cages with those of 1935 show the remodeling done on the cabs. The den itself retained its prior profile and it appears little if any work was done on this portion of the vehicle. When this work on the motorized equipment was completed the fleet took on the appearance that would remain for the final years of the show. Although some newer model tractors would replace older ones and there would continue to be some slight remodeling on a few units, in general there would be no more major changes. It might be pointed out that all of the shows' semis used for hauling the elephants and other stock were open at the top exposing the animals to the elements. Ring stock while enroute often wore blankets to cut down on the rain and chill.

Color scheme for the baggage vehicles continued to be red with title and numbering in silver. Most trucks had the names of their contents painted on the sides, such as "poles", "canvas" etc.

The Feb. 9, 1935 Billboard carried the following advertisement, "Downie Bros. Circus Wants: Feature for concert, Seal act, lady menage riders who can ride high jumps, do swinging ladder and iron jaw. Must be young and of neat appearance. Send photo. Local contracting agent, steward, 24 hour men. Address Charles Sparks, Macon, Ga."

After two seasons on the show Jack Hoxie had left and it was Sparks desire to replace him with another movie cowboy. After several weeks it was announced that Bill Cody, western screen star, had been signed for the 1935 season. Cody had recently completed four movies and had two more to finish before the April 17 opening but would be in Macon on time. It was also mentioned that negotiations were underway to make a film on the road with a circus theme. Special lithos for Cody were ordered from Erie.

CHS Gale A. Ahrens has many items in his collection that came by way of Jack "Doc" Hughes who appeared in the Downie Bros. wild west aftershow

Photo No. 14 — Clown band truck in Downie Bros. parade, season of 1934. Photo by Eddie Jackson.



and has kindly loaned a number of important historical documents which will be reproduced later in this series. One interesting item is the Artist's Contract and Release for the 1935 season between Downie Bros. Circus Inc. and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hughes. Standard services required of the Hughes reads as follows, "Mrs. Hughes to ride menage, high jumps, Wild West Concert, and go in parade and specs. Also do swinging ladder. Mr. Hughes to produce whip act in concert, work in concert, and go in parade and specs. Show to furnish gas and oil for car." For these services the Hughes were paid the sum of Thirty (\$30.00) per week. A perusal of the contract which was more or less standard along all shows at the times does reveal this interesting bit. Two paragraphs, one printed with the largest type on the contract, deals with ushering. Par 3C reads, "It is further agreed as a part of this contract, that all male members will help usher and seat people at all times." Par 5A in the standard size type contains the identical wording. Evidently Sparks wanted to impress this on his people.

The show finally got a seal act when it signed H.C. Pickard and his Frisco Seals for the season. There were four animals, actually sea lions, which were housed in a specially designed truck owned by Pickard and displayed in the menagerie with the other cages.

The April 13, 1935 Billboard told of the final preparations being made at Macon. It said that June Williams, woman leaper, had been signed and that Jasper Davis, one of Ed Ballard's best riders at winter horse shows, had arrived in quarters and would ride in the 14 horse menage act as well as the high jumps. The Aerial Brocks had increased the number of people in their act from 3 to 5 and the wardrobe department had turned out all new costumes, new elephant blankets for the opening spec, and the harness shop had finished all new trappings for the liberty and menage acts. A final note said the show had some new billing paper and press material and that Irish Horan headed the advance using a total of 15 billers and 5 vehicles. Horan would also be in charge of the advance press while

Harry Mack would handle the press back on the show.

It might be mentioned at this point that although the Downie show always had great billing paper, a strong newspaper advertisement and story policy, and promoted both national and local banners to be hung in the big top and on the elephants in the street parade, so far as I am aware the show never had any kind of regular printed program containing a listing of acts, photos, stories, and advertising. Possibly some were printed for the many sponsored dates the show used throughout the years but even so none of them have ever come to my attention. Since Downie was big time and first class in every other way it does seem a bit strange there were no programs.

The 1935 season began in Macon on April 17. The local newspapers which told of the opening and announced the time and route of the street parade read as follows:

"With banners flying and bands playing, Downie Bros. Circus will start its annual trek about the country with two performances here today under the auspices of the Joseph N. Neel, Jr. Post of the American Legion. The shows are scheduled for 2:15 and 8:15 p.m. and the s parade will be at 11:30 a.m.

"The parade will be up the newly paved half of Mulberry Street, through Cotton Avenue and First Street to Poplar, down Poplar to Second, on Second to Cherry, and down the main street to the terminal."

The April 27, 1935 Billboard told of the opening as follows:

"Fine Opening For Downie Bros., Several Feature Acts with Show — perfect circus weather for opening at Macon, good matinee and capacity night house. Bill Cody, western screen star feature, also on show George Hanneford's troupe; Frisco's seals, Billy Siegrist, wire; Aerial Brocks; Teresa Morales, heel and toe catch. Allen Hauser is equestrian director and Ella Harris, prima Donna.

Photo No. 15 — Jack Hoxie Special truck in Downie Bros. parade, season of 1934. Photo by Eddie Jackson.



The Program

"Following street parade at noon with all equipment resplendent in new red paint the show opened with the Cavalcade of Splendor.

"Bill Cody was then introduced by Harry Mack, who handles all features on the loudspeaker. Next came riding dogs, handled by Irvin Arnold and Allen Hauser. Leaps — Tony Scala, Stanley White, and June Williams, working with clowns. The last named, feminine leaper, attracted much attention and got a big hand. Georgiana Lund did her foot slide and Mickey Larkin stood 'em on their heads with his headslide. Next the Moskavites, with principal riders in each ring. Ella Harris sang while the following worked on swinging ladders: Marion Shuford, Georgiana Lund, Cora Bailey Davis, Crystobel Roberts, Darlene Harding, Ruby Hughes, Malee Harding, Myrtle McGuyre, Lola Lamb, Teresa Morales, Sadie Marento, and Jewel Poplin.

Under direction of Larry Davis, Ella Harris worked the elephants. The Larkins, Carl and Mickey, did their furniture balancing while the clowns put on a comedy acrobatic act. Jewell Poplin worked dogs while Allen Hauser worked pigs. The Aerial Brocks, Alex Brock, Charles Forest, Stewart Roberts and Lawrence 'Red' Fillinger clowning received much applause. This act was followed by clown walkaround. Mr. Sparks is not using the exploding Ford this year because of fright at the shooting and explosion last season. Georgiana Lund, Crystobel Roberts and Lois Lamb did iron jaw. Neatly uniformed maids in attendance added to appearance of this act. Roy Leonhart, George McMann and Minert DeOrlo did comedy boxing number, Allen Hauser, Carlos Carreon and Irvin Arnold handled the liberty act with eight horses in center ring; six on one side and eight ponies on other side.

"Billy Siegrist, wire act, had the crowd sweating with excitement as they waited for him to do his backward somersault without any balance. Malee Harding, new on the show, drew all eyes as she did a 'walkaround' in a horse-drawn cart, Etta Carreon rode a horse with bells on its feet and her horse kept time by kicking a big tin disc on the rear of Miss Hardings cart. Larry Davis directed, while Ruby Hughes and Myrtle McGuyre handled Tina and Babe in their elephant burlesque wire-walking act. Friscoe seals proved one of the neatest acts in show. H.C. Pikcard handles them. Anna Brock, Myrtle McGuyre and Ella Harris did single traps and muscle grind.

"George Hanneford as usual, laid 'em in the aisle with his comedy and expert riding. Mrs. Hanneford is ringmaster for the act and George is assisted by Isobel McCree and a young man in tux. The menage act included Carlos Carreon, Etta Carreon, Marion Shuford, Jewell Poplin, Georgiana Lund, Crystobel Roberts, Allen Hauser, Dariene and Malee Harding, Ruby Hughes, Myrtle McGuyre, Ella Harris, Irvin Arnold, Sadie Mareno and Cora Bailey Davis. I¹rnold directed Charles Sparks' Blue Ribbon high-jumping horses, ridden by Etta Carreon, Carlos Carreon, Marion Shuford, Ruby Hughes and Malee Harding. The Larkins and the Brock Troupe, worked perch acts followed by Teresa Morales and her heel and toe catch to breath-taking gasps and thunderous applause. Closing number was the Indian Fantasy with Ella Harris singing Indian Love Call; giant flags dropping from the tent top and red lights burning.

"Concert — Jack Hughes directs the

concert, introducing first Bill Cody. Bill makes a nice talk about the movies and his public, then has the kids line up along the rail and shakes hands with them. Cody went over big with his hand-shaking and was all that he did at the opening matinee. Jack and Ruby Hughes do whip cracking. Carlos Carreon does the big horse catch and Ed Williams clowns. The following trick riders work in the aftershow. Darlene and Malee Harding, Jack and Ruby Hughes, Charlie and Jewel Poplin, and Irvin Arnold."

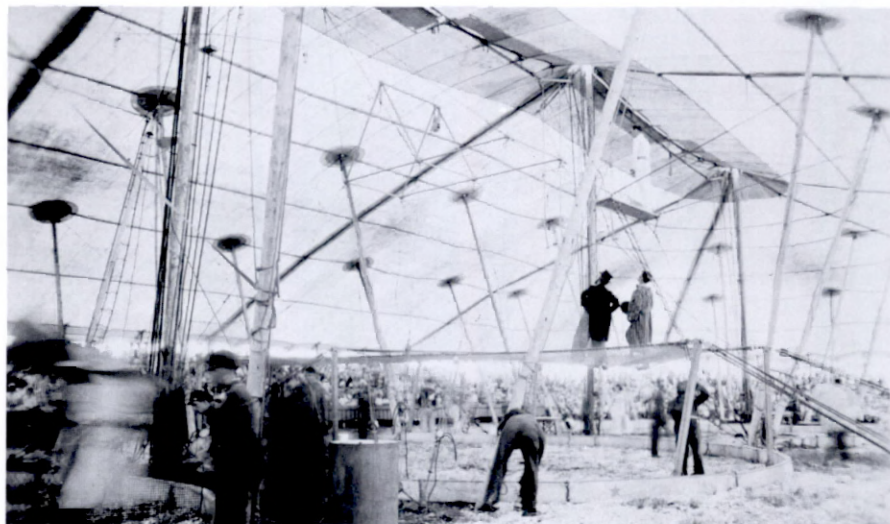
Other notes in the review said that Rodney Harris led the big show band and had total of 13 men. Jack Mills played cornet, and C.E. Duble, trombone. Clown alley had 11 joeys.

Milt Robbins, sideshow manager, had the following lineup: Ralph Redden, inside lecturer, did Punch, magic, and vent; Gertrude Redden, impalement; Gloria Hand, bag punching; Anna Living, snakes; Mitzi Robbins, mentalist; Luana Sanchez, Hawaiian troupe of five; Edward Washington, director of minstrel and band with 11 in company.

The 1935 staff was as follows: Charles Sparks, manager; Charles Katz, asst. manager; Clint Shuford, treasurer; William Morgan, auditor; Jerome Harriman, general agent; Irish Horan, contracting press and advance agent; Charles Brewer, story man; J.R. Hervey, contracting agent; W. Cleavinger, 24 hour man; Frank McGuyre, legal adjuster; Harry Mack, press agent on show. Lola Morales, in charge of wardrobe; Joe Gilligan, master of transportation; George Singleton, supt. of canvas; Barney (Soldier) Lonsdorf, props; Anthony Lasky, chief electrician; Frank Carl, steward; William McNeil, master mechanic; Fred DeIvey, boss carpenter; Harry Phillips in charge of ring stock; Larry Davis, elephant boss; Albert Moody, cage boss; and M. Malman, supt of concessions.

Second stand of the season was at Athens, Georgia on April 18 where I was living and attending junior high school at the time. I recall they dismissed us from school about 11:30 a.m. so that we could walk down the half block to Prince Avenue to view the parade. It was my first experience at seeing Downie Bros. so early in the season and I was amazed at the freshness and beauty of the costuming, the paint job done on the vehicles, and the general appearance of the street parade. Other parades I had witnessed in recent years were in the fall after the season had taken its toll in wear and tear. I didn't make a parade listing that day, but after thoroughly viewing Roger Boyd's move of the 1935 parade it appears the march was essentially the same as the previous year. One change of course was that Jack Hoxie's units were no longer present. Instead

Photo No. 16 — Interior of Downie Bros. big top, season of 1934. Roberts Troupe performing on aerial bars, as the Aerial Brocks. Pfening Collection.



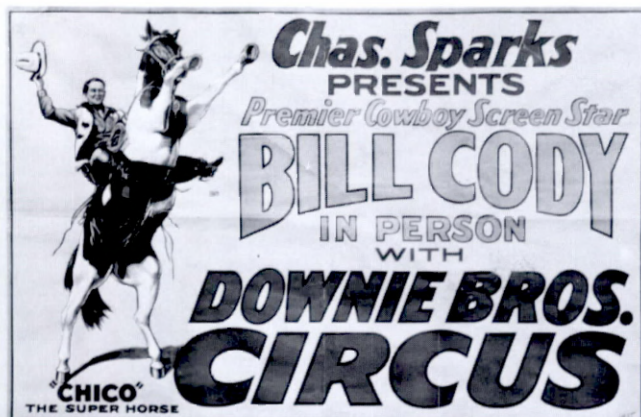


Photo No. 17 — Downie Bros. one sheet flat by Erie featuring Bill Cody, Western Screen Star, and Chico, the super horse, season of 1935. Kent Ghirard Collection.

there was an automobile which pulled a trailer containing Bill Cody's horse. I do recall that all cages and trucks in the parade had small flags mounted on them and there was one open, flat bed type semi, upon which costumed performers were seated. The Washington Crossing The Delaware semi carried the big show band to lead it off and the air calliope brought up the rear. Other musical units rode the same vehicles they did in 1934.

After viewing the parade we had to return to the classroom for about another hour and then were set free so we'd have time to catch the matinee. I lost no time in heading for the Hillcrest Avenue showgrounds and was there in just a matter of minutes. The show made a beautiful sight on the lot. I cannot remember whether there was any new canvas but I don't believe there was and strongly suspect the 1934 tents were still being used.

The following are notes I made on the menagerie.

Downie Bros. Circus Menagerie, Athens, Ga., April 18, 1935.

5 elephants (Teddy, Tena, Babe, Queen, Pinto)

4 camels (all Asiatic)

Cages and Contents.

1 — 4 sea lions

2 — 1 tiger

3 — 2 leopards

4 — 2 jaguars

5 — 1 hyena and 1 sloth bear

6 — 1 lion

7 — 1 lion and 1 kangaroo

8 — 1 lion

9 — monkeys

The cages were painted a variety of colors. The cage housing the sea lions was owned by Pickard and was a straight bed truck although its profile was somewhat different from the regular Downie Bros. vehicles. It had standard bars on the sides and was equipped with a tank in the floor for the varmints to frolic in.

The weather in Athens was beautiful

that day and the show did good business. It was the last circus to use the Hillcrest Avenue lot which had been in use since 1931 when the former King Avenue lot, two blocks away, was partially sub divided. Actually the Hillcrest lot wasn't too satisfactory as it was rather small and had too much of a slope but it was closer to town than the lot on Oglethorpe Avenue which Hagenbeck-Wallace broke in during the fall of 1934 and Cole Bros. would later use in the fall of 1935.

From Athens the show moved into South Carolina for a single stand at Anderson, then on to Asheville, N.C., April 20, for the only date in that state. Going into Tennessee for six dates the show played in the eastern portion of the state with first stand coming at Knoxville. Moving north Downie entered West Virginia's coal regions playing Bluefield, Beckley, Charleston, and Logan. It was at Iron-ton, Ohio, May 3, played Ashland, Ky. the next day, then returned to Ohio for stands at Portsmouth, Chillicothe, Athens, Lancaster, and Coshocton. Returning to West Virginia the show played Holidays Cove, then moved back into Ohio to catch East Liverpool on May 13 which concluded the dates in the Buckeye State.

Sparks said in the May 25, 1935 Billboard that Ohio had been good territory for Downie Bros. He was quoted, "Despite rain and cold weather most every day the show experienced big business at every Ohio stand." The surprise stand was Athens where there were two capacity crowds. At East Liverpool there was a good matinee and near capacity at night.

Eight stands in Pennsylvania came next with McKeesport, May 14, leading them off. The show found this part of the country full of circuses and other outdoor amusements and competition was greater than at any other time in recent years. An example of the situation would be to look at Oil City, Pa. which Downie played May 21. Barnett Bros. was in earlier on May 4 and shows which were to follow Downie into town were as follows. Knepp & Dehmert Carnival, week of May 21,



Photo No. 19 — One sheet flat posted in 1935 pictures liberty horse acts. Color scheme has red title, wording "Big 3 Ring" in blue, cream canvas background at top, green grass, and red and blue rings. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

Hagenbeck-Wallace, June 3, Johnny J. Jones Exposition (large railroad carnival) week of June 17, and Cole Bros. was also scheduled for a date in June.

Downie was at Corry, Pa., May 22, playing on the old fairgrounds lot. There was a dispute in ownership of the lot between the city and a private individual, so it was agreed that money paid for the fee rental would go to a charity. School children were dismissed from classes that day to attend the circus and a promotional gimic in the local newspapers had the kids coloring a cut of Bill Cody in a contest with passes given to the winners.

The show entered New York at Jamestown, May 23, and followed with stands at Olean, Hornell, Elmira, Geneva, Cortland, Ithaca, Auburn, and Oswego. George Barlow III attended the show at Elmira, May 27, and told The Billboard that the show had satisfactory business that day and that Bill Cody and the new seal act were going over big.

Downie went into Massachusetts at North Adams, June 5, the first of nine consecutive stands in the state. While at Lawrence, Mass, June 14, the show took delivery of four elephants which had been purchased from Asa W. Candler of Atlanta, Ga. They were shipped from Atlanta to Lawrence by railway express. Candler, a Coca-Cola bigwig, had maintained an extensive private zoo located on his estate on Briarcliff Road in Atlanta for a number of years. At one time he had employed Al Langdon, well known circus elephant trainer, to take charge of his bulls. In the spring of 1935 Candler, bowing to pressure from some of his neighbors, decided to dispose of his zoo. Many animals were donated to the municipally owned Grant Park Zoo while others were sold, including the four elephants to Downie Bros. Early history and original names of the



Photo No. 20 — Unloading elephants in Downie Bros. lot about 1935. Male tusker, Teddy, is at right. Maurice Allaire Collection

elephants are not known to the author. Some say that Candler had exotic names for his elephants and four of them were called "Coca", "Cola", "Delicious" and "Refreshing". In any event the quartet were given new names when they reached Downie Bros. They now became known as Addie (named for Mrs. Charles Sparks), Cora, Inez, and Marion. All were Asiatic females. Information on the four made in the Benedict study later in 1935 was as follows.

Addie, 6 years old, 5 ft. tall, weight, 3210 lbs.

Cora, 10 years old, 6 ft. 3 in. tall, weight 3270 lbs.

Inez, 7 years old, 6 ft. tall, weight 2310 lbs.

Marion, 8 years old, 5 ft. 11 in. tall, weight 2720 lbs.

The Downie Bros. herd now consisted of 9 elephants and the roster read as follows: Teddy, Tena, Babe, Queen, Pinto, Addie, Cora, Inez, and Marion, all Asiatic and all females with exception of the tusker, Teddy. The show was able to load the 9 into the two elephant semis already on the circus so no additional vehicles were required for their transportation. Larry Davis began a training program for the new bulls and they were soon placed in the daily street parade and it was hoped they could be worked into the performance before long. The nine bulls in the parade made a wonderful flash and was great publicity for the show. Downie now carried the largest number of elephants of any motorized circus on the road. In 1934 Barnett Bros. had 9 but that show was now down to four.

The June 22, 1935 Billboard which carried the story about the new elephants also said that Bert Sloan, wire performer, joined the show at Quincy, Mass. It was noted that business was very satisfactory and the show was running smoothly. The same issue in a different article said that many truck circuses were playing New England and that four, Downie Bros., Hunt's, Barnett Bros., and Kay Bros. were exhibiting within a radius of 50 miles of Boston. It was pointed out

however that a spirit of harmony existed among them and there had been very little direct opposition. All of the shows were reporting satisfactory business, however newly enacted motor truck laws in many New England states were causing a serious problem in routing. Downie reported very good business at North Adams, Mass. and Gloucester, Mass., June 13, saw two very good houses with the sideshow also packing them in.

Leaving the Bay State the show went into New Hampshire where the initial stand, Portsmouth, June 20, had a late matinee with only a fair house but a full big top at night. In Portsmouth due to narrow streets and the congested conditions of Saturday shopping the parade was omitted for the first time so far in the season. While at Concord, N.H., June 17, the Downie showfolk enjoyed their annual picnic at a nearby resort.

Leonard Traube, writing in his "Out in the Open" column in the June 29, 1935 Billboard, said there were three men currently on the Downie Bros. show who were together on the Mighty Haag Railroad Circus in 1912. They were Frank McGuyre, Fred Delvey, and C.E. Duble. Another note in the same issue said there had been a great deal of unseasonably bad weather during the recent spring. In many places

Photo No. 21 — Nine elephants in Downie Bros. street parade at Newport, R.I., July 20, 1935. Photo by John Cutler.



the elements had been cold and wet. Ray Rogers, owner of Barnett Bros., said it was the worst spring weather his show had ever experienced.

Downie Bros. moved into Maine at Augusta, June 25, and played a total of 14 stands before returning to New Hampshire. Kay Bros. also went into Maine about the same time and both shows reported having good business in the state. After a date at Dover, N.H., July 10, Downie played three more stands in Maine and then headed into Massachusetts. Haverhill, July 16, gave two capacity houses in continuing the trend of very fine business throughout New England. On July 17 the show played Newton, Mass. which had previously been closed to circuses but Downie succeeded in getting a license. The lot was at Cabot Park and show was under auspices of the Elks. Thousands lined the downtown streets for the first circus parade in many years and two capacity crowds filled the big top that day.

The show played Newport, R.I., July 20, Meriden, Conn., July 22, and then departed New England and went into New York for stands at Peekskill, Monticello, Port Jervis, and Honesdale. Then it was on to Pennsylvania at Stroudsburg, July 27, and twelve more stands in the Keystone state.

The Aug 17, 1935 Billboard said that Downie Bros., now in its fifth month, had experienced good business generally in Connecticut and New York. It was mentioned that only three stands in the state of Maine were without rain. There had been only one major change in the program, Bert Sloan and wife, tight wire act, had replaced Billy Siegrist. Three leopards were born three weeks ago and Fred Delvey and his crew had finished work on some vehicles and had repainted a number of others. Bill Cody was joined by two of his sons recently who are spending their school vacations on the show. A report said that Cody was working on a circus film which was one of 8 he was to make for Spectrum Pictures, however I have no information on the title of the film or if and when it was ever released. Malce Harding, a performer in the big show and concert, was Cody's leading lady in the movie. Tommy and George Hanneford Jr. were spending their school vacations on the show now and the John Sparks family came in from their

East Brady, Pa. home to visit the show for several stands in western Pennsylvania. Milt Robbins reported his sideshow business had been good lately.

After experiencing the fine take in Ohio earlier in the season it was decided to route the show back into that state in hopes it would still be profitable. Uhrichsville, August 12, was the first of six dates on a return to Ohio. The lot at the initial stand, actually at Denison, was flooded when the show arrived but a site at the old Pennsylvania railroad shops was quickly acquired. Downie, first show in the immediate vicinity in about five years played to a fair matinee and near capacity at night. Sparks was quoted in the Aug 24, 1935 Billboard as saying his long eastern tour had been satisfactory and "rains provided a serious handicap in recent weeks but business conditions were much improved compared to a year ago." A final note said that the new elephants were being used in the finale on the hippodrome track but had not yet appeared in the regular act.

Although Downie's business was holding up alright, the 1935 season for some shows was not as good as a year ago. A slump hit several shows in late July and early August. Both Hagenbeck-Wallace and the new Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Railroad Circus dropped five cars from their trains and sent them back to winter quarters. Barnett Bros. also did considerable retrenching and Al G. Barnes was another show finding the pickins slimmer than in 1934. Effective August 25 Barnes cut all salaries 10 percent for the balance of the season.

While Downie was at Hamilton, Ohio, August 17, the Billboard's Cincinnati office sent a reporter to look the show over. He wrote in the August 31 issue that the tent was more than half filled at the matinee with a two-thirds house at night in ideal weather. He said the show had encountered more than 60 days of rain so far but business on the whole had been satisfactory. Other notes said that Marion Shuford was currently out of the program which was essentially the same as presented on opening day with exception of the Sloan wire act replacing Siegrist. The article said the current Downie big top was a 120 ft. round with three 40 ft. middles and on the lot was a total of 104 vehicles, including show owned trucks and privately owned autos and house trailers. While Downie was at Hamilton the Tom Mix Circus was across the river at Covington, Ky.

Downie then headed directly south and crossed Kentucky and Tennessee in six stands. A long run over the mountains to Harriman, Tenn. from Somerset, Ky. caused the loss of the matinee. Chattanooga, Tenn., Aug 23, gave big business at both performances and Rome, Ga., the following



Photo No. 23 — Downie Bros. big top on lot at Fall River, Mass., July 17, 1935. Stringer semi is in foreground. Photo by John Cutler.

day, was another good one. The huge parade crowd downtown in Rome was the largest in many years. The show expected and received good patronage during its first stands in the south where it was said that general economic conditions there were ahead of many sections of the country.

Going over into Alabama the show played Gadsden, Anniston, Sylacauga, and Alexander City. It then returned to Georgia at Columbus, Aug 30, and next headed into the state's rich tobacco belt which was said to have been in its best shape in years.

In the meantime the quickly changing pattern of state regulations affecting motorized shows was becoming an acute problem so The Billboard began running a special "Motor Transportation Department" which dealt with the various state regulations as to speed, size license, permits, lights, brakes etc. The problems presented motorized show owners by various state regulatory agencies really didn't abate until

World War II when a new set of War Time Regulations came forth from the Feds to further taunt them. It was only after World War II that such matters finally became normalized.

Coming into the deep south didn't get Downie away from the stiff opposition from other shows it had experienced most of the season so far, but fortunately the show was able to beat Rice Bros. into both Chattanooga and Rome.

The Sept. 17, 1935 Billboard contained an interesting piece which said that The Chattanooga Times editorialized after Downie's recent appearance that it would rather see a circus parade without bands than observing the elephants in the march draped with all those advertising banners. The editorial read as follows.

"In the parade here Friday, elephants and the onlookers were the victims of the advertising spirit. The several elephants bore, draped over their ample flanks, signs which set forth the advantages of this and that. It was a new note in circus parades. The elephants looked as if they were chagrined and seemed to sense they were miscast.

"Away with brass bands if you will, and calliopes too, if need be, but let us have hereafter all elephants in the circus parade free from the trappings of publicity banners. Let us have our circus elephant rough and in the raw." (Author's note. The editorial writer made his good points but advertising banners on elephants in circus street parades was a practice common on many shows for many seasons. It was certainly nothing new.)

Downie was able to make its appearance for two days at Savannah, Ga., Sept 9-19, under auspices of the Knights of Columbus and Temple Mickvy, despite attempts to bar the show. Permission had been originally given to use Daffin Park near an exclusive residential section by the city fathers but a delegation of residents came up with a petition alleging the circus would be a nuisance. The joint auspices, rather than go through a battle at city hall, got permission to use the old fairgrounds outside the city limits. Street cars were still able to operate over a line abandoned some time earlier to take care of the circus patrons. The show's parade traveled streets inside the city limits.

The show arrived in Savannah on Sunday and spent most of the day repairing the big top which was

CHATTANOOGA
FRI., 1935 23
AUG.
ENGEL STADIUM

CHAS. SPARKS presents
DOWNIE BROS.
CIRCUS

Featuring
BILL CODY
PREMIER COWBOY SCREEN STAR
IN PERSON



WITH "CHICO"
HIS SUPER HORSE
TENA & BABE
WORLD'S GREATEST
TIGHT WIRE WALKING
ELEPHANTS

ALL NEW STREET PARADE AT NOON
TWO SHOWS 2 AND 8 P.M. DOORS OPEN 1 AND 7 P.M.
 BUILT UP TO A STANDARD - NOT DOWN TO A PRICE

NEW LOW PRICES
CHILDREN UNDER 12
25¢
ADULTS
50¢

damaged by the backlash of a tropical storm which hit while playing Tifton, Ga., Sept. 5 in which a performance was lost. At Savannah there was a large turnout for the parade but daily rains were still following the storm and the wet stuff came down before the march was half over sending the crowds for cover. There was a brief clearing spell but the rains were pouring again by matinee time. It then rained off and on all the next day. While in Savannah Manager Sparks was host to all of the city orphans at one performance. There was considerable opposition in Savannah from the new Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus which was scheduled for October 1. It would be the first rail show to play the city since Ringling-Barnum was there in 1928. The Big Show itself also scheduled Savannah for November 8 so the fans in that city got a real circus treat in 1935.



Photo No. 8 — One sheet upright for lady rider has red title with wording "Big" and "Ring" in green and "3" in blue. Yellow background. This sheet was used in 1934 but there was no performer by name of Sally Lou Marsh on the show that season. In all probability this was an old stock sheet reprinted with a Downie title. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

Rumors began flying all over the circus world that Downie Bros. would be on rails in 1936 but when questioned, Sparks, would offer no comments for publication.

Leaving Savannah the show went into South Carolina for five dates, then on to North Carolina for 15 more. It returned to South Carolina to play Spartanburg, Oct. 7, then went back to North Carolina for Gastonia, Hickory, and Albermarle. The show was at Bennettsville, S.C., Oct 11, and five



Photo No. 22 — Cage in Downie Bros. street parade at Newport, R.I., July 20, 1935. Note rounded front of cab's top. Photo by John Cutler.

additional stands took it across the state and into Georgia where Gainesville saw the show on October 17. Moving through Georgia the show stopped at Griffin and LaGrange. Two Alabama stands came next and then the show moved into Florida at Panama City, Oct. 23.

The Sept. 28, 1935 Billboard had some comments on Downie activities. It said the show had lost only three performances so far in the season, Mt. Carmel, Pa., Harriman, Tenn., and Tifton, Ga. It said that Bill Cody closed several weeks ago but exact date was not given. A final note said that the extremely high license fee in Savannah of \$1,000 would have been avoided even had the show played inside the city limits because it used auspices and in so doing would not have to pay it. It might be noted that Downie, as well as other circuses, would frequently play various dates under auspices in those days. This was some 15-20 years before the sponsored date with UPC's became popular. Various advantages came to a show with an auspice, usually in the matter of avoiding a high license fee, playing a so called "closed town" or generating additional business by the prestige and advertising of the auspice.

The Florida tour took the show through the Panhandle, then over into the central part of the state, and on to the Tampa, St. Petersburg area. At Gainesville, Oct. 28, the show had two

capacity houses. It was decided not to go down to Miami so after appearing at St. Petersburg, Nov. 2, the show crossed the state to Daytona where it played Nov. 4, and followed with St. Augustine the next day. Final stand of the season came at Brunswick, Ga., Nov. 6, after which the show moved on to its Macon quarters. Total mileage for the season was 11,459.

A few weeks after the closing, Allen Hauser was selected to be equestrian director for the annual Shrine Circus in the Macon Auditorium. The show's dogs and ponies were used as was The Larkins act.

The Dec. 21, 1935 Billboard said that Sparks, Charlie Katz, and Irish Horan had gone to New York City on business in conjunction with personnel and equipment. Rumors had it the trio were looking for a big name to head the aftershow next season.

The Dec. 28, 1935 Billboard gave the news that Larry Davis had left Downie Bros. to take charge of the Ringling-Barnum elephant herd at their Sarasota quarters. This was quite a promotion for Davis, who was a most capable elephant trainer. No replacement for him was announced. The same issue said that the 1935 circus season had not been up to the mark set in 1934 and that a cold and rainy spring plus the infantile paralysis epidemic in Virginia in August had hurt many shows. However, 1935 was still a pretty good one for Charlie Sparks and his Downie Bros. Circus. As the old year expired rumors were still going strong that Sparks planned to put his show on rails next season.

Classic Circus Scenics



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SINCE 1944

ONE SHEET By STUART THAYER

The two most important technological advancements in the history of the American circus are the adoption of the canvas tent as theatre and of the railroad as a means of movement. We have never heard of any disagreement with that premise. As to the date and person or persons responsible for introducing the tent, however, there has been disagreement. We will try in this column to unravel the mystery.

The progression in types of arenas would seem to be from wooden buildings to sidewalls of canvas to complete tents. But as with all human endeavor, the story is not that neat. The wooden arena was expensive, permanent (in that it could not be moved) and gradually unwelcome in many cities because of the danger of fire. As early as 1807 the city fathers of Baltimore passed an ordinance forbidding the construction of wooden buildings in the center portion of that city. More important, as showmen began moving into smaller towns they were met by audiences restricted in size so that engagements became much shorter than previously. Instead of three weeks or a month of performances such as larger cities could support, small towns might only be profitable for three or four days. Because of this the expense of erecting a building was prohibitive.

The question then becomes, why show the smaller towns? Competition forced it. The number of circuses gradually increased as American impresarios came into the business beginning in 1823. The number of circuses advertising over the next five years reads like this: 1823, five; 1824, five; 1825, nine; 1826, thirteen; 1827, twelve; 1828, sixteen. There were not enough large cities to support all these shows.

Menageries had used canvas sidewalls for some time; it was no problem to include one in a caravan already moving by wagon. Benjamin Brown claimed that his brother Christopher used one in the period 1820-23 when they were exhibiting Hackaliah Bailey's second elephant. Since most of the early American circus proprietors came from the Hudson Valley counties that were also home to the menagerie operators of the day, the connection is easily established and the dissemination of the knowledge accounted for.

One thing at which we can only guess, however, is the showman's attitude toward canvas sidewalls. We have found no advertisement suggesting their use, thus it would appear that it was considered a step down from wooden arenas and therefore nothing to be publicized.

Troupes using tents ('pavilions' was the contemporary term) on the contrary, felt it was a feature to be noted and most of them headed their ads 'Pavilion Circus.' This is an aid to research in the subject and establishes what we consider the fact that a circus playing a short engagement in a small town was using a sidewall if they did not advertise the use of a tent.

An examination into what historians have had to say on the adoption of the tent produces no consensus as to person or year, but must be included in order that a thesis be offered.

George Stone (1860) and T. Alston Brown (1861), the earliest commentators on circus history, offer nothing. Isaac Greenwood (1898) made two relative statements. The first:

"These rolling shows (such as Aron Turner — ed.) were on the road much earlier (than 1817) and had . . . no band . . . no ringmaster and no tent."

We include this quotation so as not to exclude any, but it is full of error. Aron Turner was not on the road before 1826; the earliest "rolling show" could not be before 1819, if then. But he does not ascribe a tent to Turner, as do some others.

Greenwood's second statement is:

"About 1828 we read of Buckley and Wick's circus (as an improvement on the sidewall) with . . . a tent of seventy-five feet diameter."

We wish we knew where he read this. Buckley had a show of his own in 1828 about which there is a dearth of information, but if it was a tent show, it was not the first. There was a circus in 1834 and 1835, and no other years, under the management of Buckley and Weeks and we wonder if Greenwood's reference is to that.

Our next expert, W.C. Coup, wrote or had written for him in his supposed autobiography (1901): "The first circus ever in America was started by Nathan A. Howes and Aaron (sic) Turner under a top canvas in 1826."

Of course, this wasn't the first circus, but perhaps Coup meant the first tented circus. In any event there is no proof of Howes and Turner having a tent in 1826, as we will demonstrate.

Charles H. Day (1906) quotes George F. Bailey as saying, "In his first season on the road Turner used no top, only a sidewall, which he made himself. In 1830 the Turners had a ninety-foot top."

Since Bailey was Turner's son-in-law we doubt we'll find a better source. This would seem to eliminate Turner from the race.

Day also says, "Nathan Howes bought the elephant, Old Bet, in 1825 and was the first manager to use a round top the same year."

This statement has been used far and wide. E.C. May in 1932 and Fox and Parkinson in 1969 being among those to repeat it. However, the first circus with Nathan Howes' name on it did not appear until 1826, the same year Bailey's second elephant (not Old Bet) was killed in Chepachet, Rhode Island. We know the beast was not with a circus — it was advertised alone — and we know that Crane, June and Company were exhibiting it because they gave Gerald Crane and L.B. Titus a receipt for its value after it was shot. That Nathan Howes may have leased the animal at some time is a possibility, but he did not exhibit it with a circus company.

R.W.G. Vail in his "Notes" published in 1933 says, "So it was naturally that Howes and Turner's Circus should have, in 1826, embarked on a long and successful career under a full top canvas . . ."

This sounds as if it came from Coup, though Vail does not mention using that source. He quotes from Odell, May, Greenwood, Westervelt Sturtevant, none of which date the tent in 1826. We will defer, for the moment, discussion of that year.

John Dingess (circa 1895) does not directly claim a year for the first tent, but goes into some detail concerning it and speaks of it in conjunction with Howes and Company, which he says was a partnership of Howes, Turner and Sylvester Reynolds. He dates it 1826.

C.G. Sturtevant and George Chindahl both quote sources we have listed above so we will not detail their statements. Excluding them, we find the following claims as to the year in which the tent first appeared:

1826 — C.H. Day.

1826 — Coup Vail, Dingess.

1828 — Greenwood.

And as to who introduced it:

Buckley and Wicks — Greenwood.

Howes and Turner — Coup, Vail, Dingess.

Howes alone — Day.

Since only Day gave a source for his information we must use the evidence at hand to reach a decision. Nathan Howes advertised his circus in 1826, as per Dingess, and Sylvester Reynolds is mentioned in the ads. Turner is not and we think a good case can be made for his not being Howes' partner in 1826, but it has no meaning here. Howes did not mention a tent — in fact, he showed in buildings on occasion — so we assume he was using a sidewall in the smaller towns. Further, 1826 would seem to be the earliest he used anything.

The earliest ad for a tented show appears in 1825. This was in Wilmington, Delaware and appears, by geography, to be J. Purdy Brosn's circus. Brown used a tent in 1826, featured the facts in his ads and was, we believe, the first circus proprietor in the world to present tented exhibitions.

As for Howes, we cannot place him in a tent before 1828, and do so then with reservations. He was definitely in partnership with Aron Turner in that year and George F. Bailey said Turner had his first tent in 1830.

Somewhere in showman's folklore the idea that Howes and Turner had the first tent got its start and as we've shown, it was well-rooted. Oddly, neither Howes nor Turner has been quoted on the subject and Dingess was the first to mention it. J. Purdy Brown, almost unknown, died unexpectedly at the age of thirty-four and the only written material we have from him is his will. Had he lived a normal span he might have made some statement as to this innovation which we hereby assign to him.

Source of quotations:

Isaac Green, *The Circus, Its Origin and Growth Prior to 1835*, (New York, 1898).

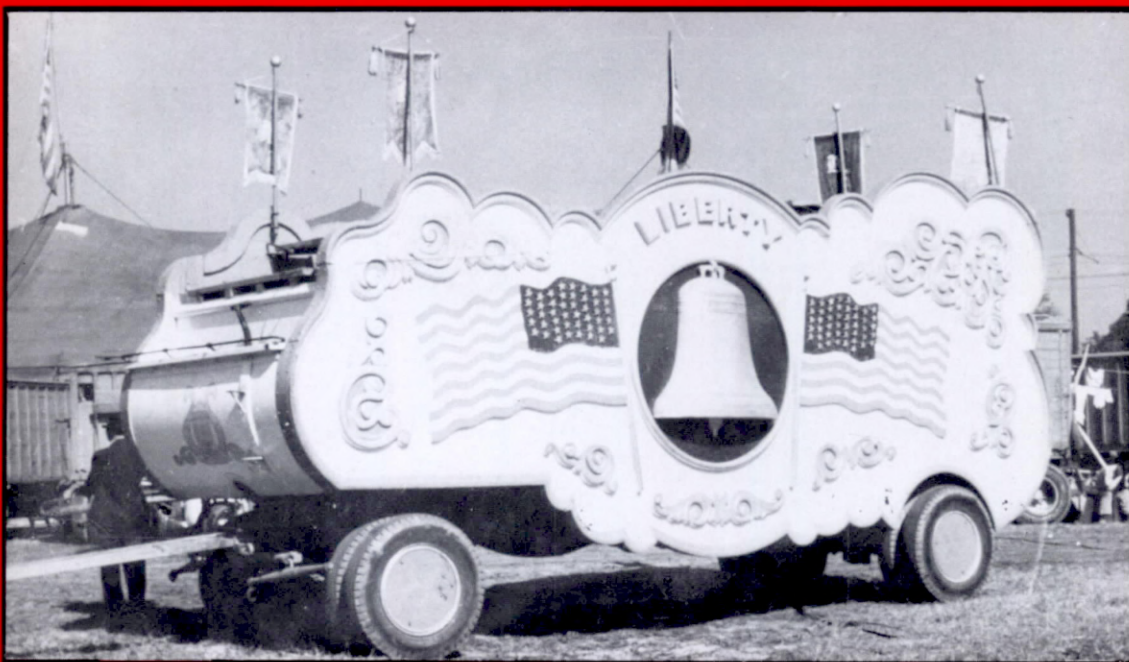
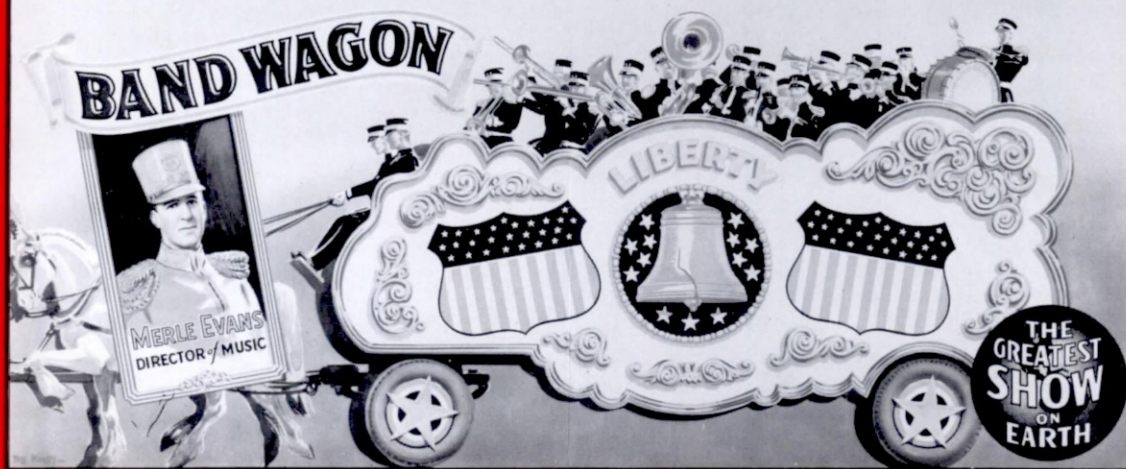
John Dingess, unpublished manuscript, Hertzberg Collection.

William C. Coup, *Sawdust and Spangles* (New York, 1901).

Charles H. Day, "History of American Circus and Tented Exhibitions," *Billboard*, December 29, 1906.

R.W.G. Vail, "Notes on the History of the Early American Circus," *Proceedings, American Antiquarian Society*, (Worcester, 1933).

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